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Give-away budget helps only taxpayers

All taxpayers will gain something from Mr Lawson's "prudent", give-away budget last month. But people too poor to pay tax will gain nothing.

The over-80s will do best with a special personal allowance and blind people will have their tax allowance increased too.

Charities have been given some much needed VAT concessions, but the gains are likely to be offset by a decrease in income from covenants as a result of the cut in Income Tax.

Here are the main points of the budget as it affects disabled people.

★ The basic rate of Income Tax is cut by 2p in the £1, from 29p to 27p. For example, a single taxpayer earning £10,000 a year will get an extra £152, and a married couple with one income of £12,000 a year an extra £164. The changes come into operation the first pay day after 17 May.

★ There is a new additional allowance for people aged over 80 which will bring a single person up to £3,070 and a married couple with one person over 80 to £4,845. This will help, the Chancellor estimates, 400,000 taxpayers and take up to 25,000 out of income tax altogether.

continued with cartoon on p. 4



We shall not be moved. Workers with visual disabilities staged a half-day walk-out of the Royal School for the Blind workshop in Waterloo last month. The workers, members of the National League of the Blind and Disabled, were protesting about plans to move to new premises and feared for their 47 jobs. Workshop manager Barry Guffog says that no jobs will be lost.

ALACs shake-up official

The Government is to embark on a radical re-organisation of its Artificial Limb and Appliance Service along the lines recommended in the McColl report.

The long-awaited announcement, by John Major, Minister for Social Security and the Disabled, was welcomed by all sides of the House.

Control of Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres (ALACs) will pass from the Department of Health and Social Security into the hands of individual health authorities which will have one or two ALACs each.

While this long-term transfer goes on, a new special health authority called the Disablement Services Authority will be responsible for the day to day running and improvement of ALACs and longer term planning. It starts work on 1 July.

Professor Ian McColl, whose highly critical independent report on ALACs was published 14 months ago, will be the vice-chairman of the authority.

The man in charge of the switch will be Lord Holderness, who lost both his legs in action in the war and held ministerial posts in the governments of

Harold Macmillan and Edward Heath.

Mr Major said the Government would upgrade the professional training and status of prosthetists (limb makers). A working party will make recommendations for improvements in training by June.

The Government will also press the artificial limb industry to agree to new contractual arrangements that will increase competition. Currently Hanger and Vessa, subsidiaries of the multinational BTR, have 75 per cent of the market.

Hopes that Mr Major might announce the introduction of a powered indoor/outdoor wheelchair to the ALAC range were disappointed. He did not, however, quite close the door.

"As for battery-powered wheelchairs," said Mr Major, "one of the principle responses of the McColl report was to suggest that there may be substantial room for improvement in the wheelchair service and possible savings to be made in its organisation and administration... If those savings are made under the management of the special health authority, they will be

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Lawlords to rule on sterilization

The House of Lords is to decide whether or not Jeanette, a 17-year-old mentally handicapped girl, should be sterilised "for her own good".

The Appeal Court authorised the sterilisation last month, but the Official Solicitor David Venables, acting as the girl's guardian, appealed against the decision to the Lords.

The five Law Lords must make their decision soon because when Jeanette becomes 18 on 20 May her consent to an operation would be needed.

Sunderland borough council, which made the application for sterilisation with the support of the girl's mother, has said it will not go ahead with the operation before the Lord's ruling.

The Appeal Court judges decided sterilisation would be in Jeanette's best interests. Lord Justice Dillon, sitting with Lord Justices Brown and Nicholls, said that Jeanette was becoming

sexually aware and that the consequences of her becoming pregnant were "frightening".

The court heard that she had a mental age of about 5 and was "incapable of informed consent" to the operation. Other forms of contraception had been ruled out on medical grounds.

Lord Justice Dillon said that sterilisation would take away a basic human right but the loss of that right "would mean nothing to her".

The decision has stimulated an emotional debate amongst mental handicap organisations, parents of people with a mental disability and medical and legal authorities. Many fear that the judgement could open the door to a more widespread use of sterilisation.

Sir Brian Rix, secretary general of Mencap, has spoken out forcefully against it. "The judgement seems to have thrown us back into the era when mentally

handicapped people were regarded as animals," he said.

Sir Brian said there was a danger of sterilisation being seen as an easy way out for carers, who might be less vigilant. "I don't believe it should be used for expediency," he added.

"In the case of conflict between the girl's interests and the parents', the girl's must always come first," he said. "Mummy knows best" is not always the

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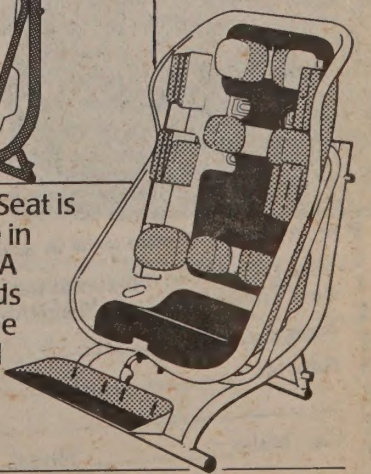
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Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

Students must demand more

Lord Snowdon is surely correct when he says that colleges do not consider the practical needs of disabled students enough (DN February).

It is now almost ten years since the publication of the Warnock Report highlighted the need for colleges to design and implement a policy to provide access to all students with special educational needs.

During those ten years colleges have, in general, made considerable efforts to provide special courses for some groups. But as Freddie Green pointed out speaking at the NBHS Annual Conference soon after joining The Spastics Society, they have too often chosen the easy options and have made little effort to provide for people with the more severe physical handicaps.

Lord Snowdon is also reported as suggesting that colleges should liaise informally to help each other solve problems - not via "a 5-day seminar attended by robed rectors and professors sitting in conclave". Without wishing to disagree with the sentiment, colleges have been liaising informally for many years, not least under the auspices of NBHS. It is their lack of power to influence rectors, college principals and governors, whether sitting in or out of conclave, that is the heart of the problem.

The missing ingredient - vital if college management is to take more notice of the needs of students with physical disabilities - is for those same students, or potential students, to demand more: an effective college policy; a co-ordinator for disabled students in every college; special courses where these are needed to catch up on education missed; proper support for students on mainstream courses; a planned approach and commitment to making all areas of the college

accessible to all students.

The NBHS will be running 2 courses for intending higher education students at which many of these issues will be discussed - at the University of Reading, 6-9 April and in Scotland 30 June-2 July - when young people with disabilities will have the chance to meet and talk to current and past students.

It is still not easy for students with disabilities making their way through further and higher education. Students acting together with some very committed teaching staff can make it very much better.

Richard Stowell

Director

National Bureau for Handicapped Students
366 Brixton Road
London SW9 7AA

Taxi-less

I understand that you recently did an article about taxis for the disabled giving the names of firms which are offering a taxi service (see DN January and February).

I have been trying this week (2 March) to get transport in London for a child in a wheelchair and was given the numbers of two taxi firms by The Spastics Society.

The first one I tried - Radio Taxis, 01-272 0272 - were very apologetic; they are still awaiting delivery of the specially modified vehicles and have been let down, so that at the moment they have not started the service.

The second one - Computer-Cab, 01-286 2728, said they had 8 cabs and would have to ring the individual drivers to find who was available. When I rang again to find out what they had arranged, I was told that they only have 3 such cabs and that even if I booked one they could not guarantee that it would be there!

This is worse than useless.

Eventually I got transport from Camden Dial-a-Ride who

very kindly agreed to do it even though the girl was not registered with them or resident in London.

Jean M. Battiwalla
London N5

Your letter is the second complaint we have had, so we checked back to both companies.

Radio Taxis do not take bookings and with only one converted taxi on loan from the manufacturer, they say it is impossible for the driver to respond to a call if he is on the other side of town. Each driver owns his own taxi and would have to find £1,500 for the conversion. At the moment no grants are available.

Computer-Cab has set up a charitable organisation to raise money for conversions. They have 8 FX4Ws on the road and enough money to convert 4 more. The poor service you received was due, they say, to a breakdown in communication at Computer-Cab - converted taxis are now deployed from the marketing department not the

there should be no restrictions beyond those compatible with each person's readiness to grow in ability, independence and self-determination.

These objectives mean that people must have privacy if they desire it, and this must include access to privacy with another person.

A working group within the social services division is preparing recommendations on policy and procedures for the Society. These will include protecting and promoting the rights of clients and staff and also ways in which vulnerable people can be protected from unwarranted exploitation.

The working party is consulting with disabled people, professional staff, specialist agencies such as SPOD and other voluntary organisations. I hope it will report to the Social Services Committee and then the Executive Council later this spring.

The Society will have to develop a policy to cover human rights and staff needs, including training. The sexual and emotional needs of disabled people



Stanley Samuels of Radio Taxis helps Josephine Reilly into the cab.

control room to ensure they are put to best use. To book a converted taxi, ask for the marketing department which will check if a cab is available when you want it. If a booking is accepted, the firm guarantees the cab will be there - Editor.

A policy for today

Your article, "If I am treated as a child, how can I be sexual?" (DN, February) raised many important issues and personal concerns.

The Spastics Society has for some time been concerned about how best the emotional and sexual needs of people with disabilities might be met within the law and within acceptable frameworks - acceptable, that is, to society as a whole, to staff and, in residential services, to fellow residents as well as, of course, to individuals.

These are very sensitive matters with not only social work but also personal implications. However, they cannot and must not be avoided simply because they are difficult to address. Such an approach would be a denial of the rights of people with disabilities.

In a residential setting, where the quality of life for the client is highly dependent on the attitudes and skills of workers, a framework of procedures and policy must be developed.

The Executive Council has considered this matter and will do so again. The Council has accepted that every human being should have opportunities to sustain his or her value and dignity; respect should be expressed in actively promoting those opportunities for human beings who have lost, forfeited or been deprived of them; and

have for too long been ignored or suppressed simply for the convenience of the caring professionals. This is unacceptable. As the Society becomes a provider of enabling services, that approach must be reflected in all matters relating to people with disabilities.

John W. Belcher

Director of Social Services
The Spastics Society

Sic joke

It is extraordinary - and inexcusable - that *Disability Now* should publish three sneering, racist little pieces in the "sic" column (January).

The tone and inference from the first two pieces were that Third World countries are "quaintly behind" the West in their attitudes towards people with disabilities. In the third piece, the reference to the insensitive man's nationality was unpleasantly gratuitous. This effect was compounded by the fueling of the racist stereotypes about Irish people, their drinking habits and intellectual levels.

It is disappointing that *Disability Now* has not yet learnt that "jokes" which denigrate people's cultural background are as offensive and damaging as those about a person's disability.

Marion Janner
London N5

The January "sic" was trying to show how negative attitudes to disability persist in different parts of the world. To do this it had to make clear where the comments were made and by whom. It was not aiming to poke fun at any nationality. We would be very concerned if "sic" in any way encouraged discriminatory attitudes - Editor.

(sic)

DN's diary column

by Simon Crompton

and Karen Wingate

Careless

To lose one wheelchair may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose 20 looks like carelessness... Disabled people in Birmingham have been specifically asked to mark their property after 20 wheelchairs and 4 artificial legs were handed into the police lost property department in the last year.

Educational

For some reason one just tends to assume that a body like the Department of Education and Science has the facts about education at its fingertips. Not if a recent phone call to The Spastics Society is anything to go by. DHSS central office rang the Society's publicity and information department to find out how many special education schools there are in the country. When the caller was told that the Department of Education might be more help, she said she'd already tried them and they'd put her onto The Spastics Society.

Manning

Liberal MP Archy Kirkwood, sponsor of the Access to Personal Files Bill (see page 3), took part in the recent parliamentary debate on women in the community. Unfortunately, his call for equal opportunities for women in a male-dominated society seemed ill-served by his choice of words at the beginning of his speech, when he noted that the ministerial advisers' bench was "manned by women".

Flattering

Amongst the many (honest!) complimentary letters that *Disability Now* receives every month, none was so flattering as the recently-received envelope directed enthusiastically to "Disability Wow!"

Steep

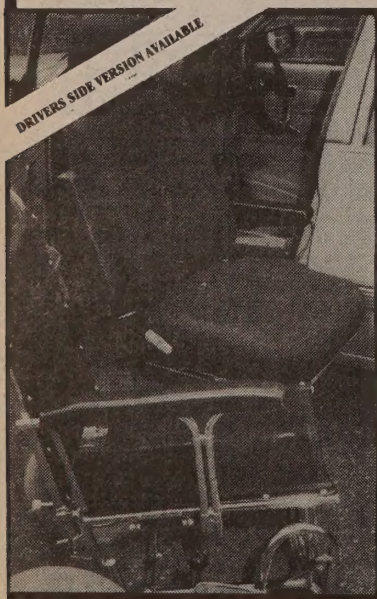
At the press launch last month of a new computerised ticket system on trial in the Thamesmead area, London Buses invited a number of pensioners to board a sample bus and try it out. For half an hour they gamely climbed on and off before announcing the automatic machines (which read a magnetic strip on bus passes) simple to use, and a special lower step for easy boarding a great help. Coffee and biscuits on board a London Liner bus presented a more formidable hurdle, however. The elderly guests found they had to mount a high step and struggle up a steep, narrow staircase before being rewarded with their refreshment.

Uninterrupted

Lord Campbell of Croy, who became paralysed in one leg during the war, says in *The House Magazine* that life in the Lords may be more sedate, but when he was in the Commons his disability mattered less. MPs seemed to be only too happy to interrupt his speeches and give him a chance to sit down, he said, but in his Lordship's House everyone is so polite that he's often left standing for long periods.

(Contributions please, to DN)

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New GCSE could handicap deaf children

Teachers of deaf children fear that the introduction of the new GCSE exam this summer will be a severe setback for the educational hopes of hearing-impaired children.

"We're facing a situation where very bright children, who last year would have got 10 CSEs, this year will get one GCSE," said Peter Merrifield, head teacher at Oak Lodge School for hearing-impaired children in Wandsworth, London.

His school hosted a meeting last month, where representatives from Britain's 20 schools for deaf children aired the problem with members from the British Deaf Association, the National Deaf Children's Society, the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf and some of the examination boards involved.

GCSE exams require a much more complex use of language than the previous CSE exams, say teachers, and deaf children's language development is often severely retarded by hearing difficulties.

"The problem for our children is that they may have studied the subject very well and know the material on which the questions are based but they may not have the language competency to express themselves in the way the GCSE requires," said Peter Merrifield.

CSE examination boards allowed "Mode 3" examinations: teachers could adapt the way exams were taken specifically for hearing-impaired children.

But GCSE examination boards seem more reluctant to accept Mode 3. Peter Merrifield has had 3 submissions refused.

A sub-committee of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf will be negotiating with the Joint Council for the GCSE.

Vaccine trials delayed

Health officials faced strong criticism in the media last month for delaying the trials of 3 new whooping cough vaccines which, it is claimed, will eliminate the risk of brain damage in children.

The trials were due to start in January, but have been awaiting the go-ahead from DHSS drug safety experts.

Before trials can begin the vaccines' manufacturers must give the Department's medical division details of their research data from laboratory trials. If they are satisfied, they will issue a clinical trial certificate allowing tests to go ahead on human patients.

Manufacturers can obtain a clinical trial exemption, for example if a drug has been proved harmless and has no side effects. But a spokesman for the DHSS said: "At no time did this Department say that this was the sort of drug that would be eligible for an exemption. What the DHSS is doing is making sure the normal procedures before trials are gone through."

The new vaccines are not made from whole cells, but only from the active parts that are necessary to give protection from the disease. This means that they do not produce the symptoms, such as fever, sometimes associated with the "whole cell" vaccine, it is claimed.

The risk of brain damage with the present vaccine is estimated at one in 100,000, but many parents still fear vaccination.

Sharing the same story



A new reading system which brings together visually impaired children with their sighted friends or brothers and sisters has been developed by staff at Linden Lodge, a residential school for visually disabled children in Wandsworth, London. Clear plastic sheets carrying the braille are inserted into children's story books so that sighted and non-sighted children can read them together. Many popular children's books will now be sent from the publishers to the RNIB for braille transcription and the plastic leaves will be bound in. Here, Kelly Walker, 7, from Abermarle Primary School listens as Sultan Arel, 10, from Linden Lodge reads to her from braille.

Access to medical records will come, says Archy Kirkwood

Hopes that the new Access to Personal Files Bill will give people the right to see their own medical records are fading. And because of Whitehall redrafting, the whole Bill could emerge from the Committee stage this month considerably weakened.

But the Bill's sponsor, Archy Kirkwood MP, is confident that the right to access will be established within a year and that even if health records have to be excluded from the Bill, they will be made accessible soon.

Mr Kirkwood told *Disability Now* that it may be necessary to restrict the scope of the Bill to education, housing and social work files to make sure that something gets into the statute book recognising the right to direct access.

"My impression is that the Government is willing to concede health records but not yet," says Archy Kirkwood. "The general feeling is that if the issue of health records was taken on this outing, the potential for getting it wrong would be great."

The health minister, Tony Newton, has suggested that access to medical files might be included in a future health bill.

"I think he's sympathetic, and has no objections in principle," says Mr Kirkwood. "If we don't get it this time, I feel the pressure for the health clause is so great that we'll get it within 12 months of the enactment of the Bill."

Many professional and voluntary bodies have been campaigning for the inclusion of medical records in the Bill, including the Royal College of Nursing, the Health Visitors Association, the Association of Community Health Councils, RADAR, RNIB and MIND. The All Party Disablement Group has also expressed concern.

Many general practitioners

and consultants oppose the health clause, although the British Medical Association General Council is believed to be in favour of access.

The Bill should go to Reports Stage in May.

No speech therapy for thousands of needy children

Overwork and poor pay is causing almost one speech therapist in 12 to change career or seek retraining for another, warned a report published last month.

Thousands of children with speech disorders have been left without help because of a serious shortage of trained therapists, particularly in special education.

The report, prepared for the charity VOCAL (Voluntary Organisations Communication and Language), an umbrella organisation for speech disorder charities, follows a nationwide survey of the provision of speech therapy for children.

It reveals that the proportion of therapists working exclusively with children fell from 80 per cent in 1972 to 69 per cent in 1985.

It also gives support to the claim that the present recommended ratio of one therapist to 100 children is too low for an adequate service. But in many areas the survey shows that existing ratios do not even meet this recommended level.

In Yorkshire the ratio is one

therapist to 231 children, on average. In Trent it is 1:198 and on Merseyside 1:197.

Levels of speech therapy provision in special schools also showed serious shortfalls compared to recommended levels. The report reveals a 75 per cent shortfall for autistic children, a 70 per cent shortfall for children with mild learning difficulties and a 68 per cent shortfall for deaf or partially hearing children. Physically disabled children fared slightly better with a 20 per cent shortage.

The report concludes that the incidence of speech disorders in children is almost certainly underestimated, and that a figure of one speech therapist to every 3,000 children in the population would be a more realistic recommendation than the present one per 5,000 children.

A survey of speech therapy services for children with particular reference to special education, a report for VOCAL by Diana Cox, is available from VOCAL, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA. £2.

Down's Syndrome breakthrough

Scientists have made an important step forward in finding the causes of Alzheimer's disease and premature ageing in people with Down's Syndrome.

A group of West German and Australian scientists have for the first time identified a protein which they believe breaks down to form abnormal deposits in the brain. These deposits are found in the brain's of people with Alzheimer's disease, which causes senile dementia, and in the brains of people with Down's Syndrome over the age of 40, who tend to age prematurely and die young.

Dr Brian Stratford, an expert on Down's Syndrome at Nottingham University, said: "If the

research stands up this is a tremendously important breakthrough."

"It would be a big step towards stopping what appears to be a deterioration in the social functioning of Down's Syndrome people as they get older."

Professor Benno Möller-Hill of Cologne University said that one of his team made the breakthrough when she identified the gene responsible for the protein. This will enable scientists to track down cells that make that protein and find out what makes it disintegrate.

The discovery may also eventually enable scientists to screen for people at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

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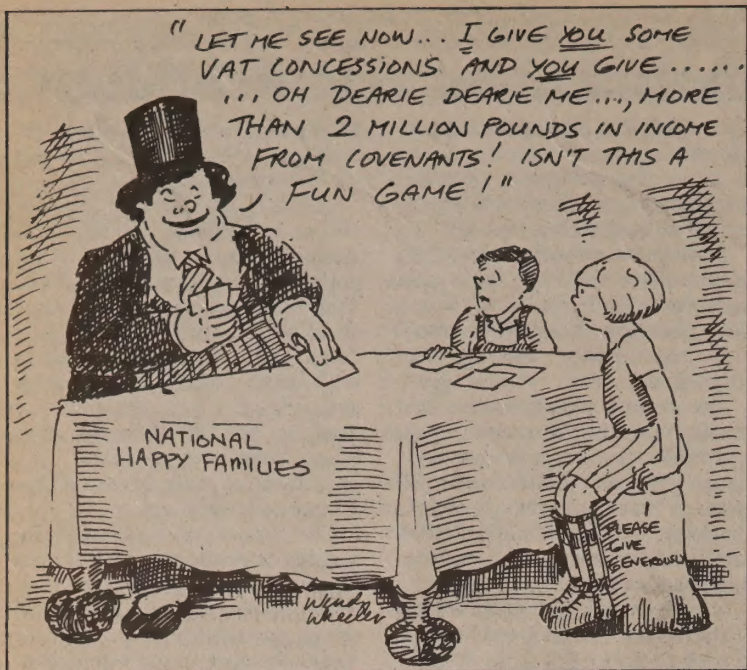
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DN/4/87



Give-away budget continued from page 1

★ The blind person's tax allowance, which has not been increased since 1981, goes up by £180 a year, to £540. According to the RNIB, it will give 30,000 blind taxpayers about 90p extra a week. It will do nothing for the 105,000 blind people who are too poor to pay tax.

★ All personal tax allowances will be increased in line with inflation, as required by law. For example a single person will get another £90 making a total of £2,425 and a married man £140 making £3,795 a year.

★ Charities will no longer have to pay VAT on new building or extensions, nor on installing or adapting a bathroom, washroom or lavatory in a residential centre run for disabled people. Charities will not have to pay VAT either on drugs and chemicals used in medical research. Welfare vehicles which transport terminally ill people will be

zero-rated, as will equipment used by charities in rescue or first aid services.

These concessions are expected, according to the Charities VAT and Tax Reform Group, to save charities a total of £5m in a year.

But what the Chancellor has given with one hand will be partially taken away with the other. Charities expect to lose more than £2m a year in lost income from covenants due to the cut in Income Tax (see cartoon above).

The Spastics Society, for example, thinks it will lose at least £9,000 a year on covenanted incomes and gain around £10,000 from the VAT concessions.

Among the comments pro and con in the debate following the budget, Dafydd Wigley's (Plaid Cymru) stood out. He thought the money given to taxpayers would have been better spent on "social legislation" such as the Disabled Person's Act, which is now held up for want of £150m.

MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Another go at anti-discrimination legislation

On 4 March Labour MP Bob Wareing sought again to introduce a Bill outlawing discrimination against disabled people on the grounds of their disability. His similar 1983 Private Member's Bill was voted down by Conservative MPs on second reading.

Quoting from The Spastics Society report *An Equal Chance for Disabled People?* he said that there was now irrefutable evidence of widespread discrimination against disabled people. Not only would the new measure prohibit discrimination against people on the grounds of disability in employment – it would also apply to education, housing, recreation, insurance and transport.

He read a letter from a 23-year old woman with mild cerebral palsy, who walks unaided, takes no medication, drives and has an upper second class degree in sociology and psychology. When she applied for Home Office sponsorship for a social work course at Nottingham University, the Home Office turned

her down on "medical grounds" after a perfunctory 15-minute medical. "That is atrocious," said Bob Wareing.

The Bill would give basic human rights to all those who are disabled. These rights would be reinforced by a commission, which could tackle many of the problems associated with discrimination on behalf of the disabled person, he said.

He hoped that the Bill would receive wide support when it came up for second reading and appealed to conservative members to allow a full debate on its provisions.

"The country is looking today to see who is and who is not prepared to support this important measure on human rights," he said.

The second reading of Bob Wareing's Disabled Rights Bill is on 3 April.

Bob Wareing has also put down an Early Day Motion (No 758) entitled "Time for debate on legislation on the disabled". You could ask your MP to sign this motion and support the Bill.

Extend severe disability premium, pleads Jack Ashley

Jack Ashley (Labour) made a plea for the Government to make the severe disability premium available to severely disabled people who did not live alone during questions on 10 March.

Most severely disabled people could not live at home alone because they must have someone to care for them. Yet these are the very people who cannot receive the premium, because they receive Attendance Allowance.

Richard Wainwright (Liberal) agreed with Jack Ashley and said that the present conditions laid down for the premium were "intolerably restrictive".

John Major, Minister for Social Security, said that organisations caring for severely disabled people had suggested alterations to the new system of benefits which the Government was considering. The premium for severely disabled people was one of them.

Free spectacles

A Bill enabling blind or partially sighted people to obtain special glasses free under the National Health Service was tabled by Alf Morris, MP, on 23 March.

The NHS supply of glasses ended last July.

Children and people on supplementary benefit now receive vouchers intended to cover the cost of their spectacles, and those requiring certain kinds of complex lenses also receive vouchers. But these rarely cover the full cost.

Alf Morris's Bill has the full support of the Royal National Institute for the Blind. It has its second reading on 1 May, but as it is not backed by the Government it stands little or no chance of becoming law.

Brian Lamb

Lobby for action!

There will be a lobby of Parliament on Wednesday 8 April, 2.30-4.30pm, to press for the implementation of the Disabled Persons Act, which received royal assent in July 1986. The lobby will also be used to support Bob Wareing's new anti-discrimination bill. For more information contact Brian Lamb, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

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If you would like full details of the Ford Motability Scheme and a copy of our brochure "Ford and the Disabled Motorist" then please fill in the "Freepost" coupon below or contact Ford Personal Import Export Ltd, Motability Dept DN1, 8 Balderton Street, London W1Y 2BN. Tel: 01-493 4070.



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Charities go to work

Five of Britain's leading charities have formed a consortium to promote the new payroll giving scheme which came into effect this month.

The consortium, called Charities at Work, is made up of the NSPCC, Help the Aged, The Spastics Society, the British Red Cross and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

By working together the charities hope to attract more people to give by offering the choice between selecting one or more of the group or spreading their donation across all 5, so helping a variety of causes at one time. They also hope that a joint effort will keep administration costs down.

The payroll giving scheme - announced in last year's budget - is aimed at encouraging millions of workers to give to charity by offering tax relief on donations. The Inland Revenue estimated it would generate £70-75 million for charities.

Under the scheme employees

can donate up to £10 a month (£120 a year), or a minimum of 25p a week, from their pay packets to one or more charities of their choice. The money is deducted from gross pay, so each £1 donated only costs a person on the basic rate of tax 73p. The rest of the money comes from the taxman.

There are 165,000 registered charities in Britain which could benefit from payroll giving.

Charities at Work is sending information packs explaining how to operate the scheme to 4,000 of Britain's largest employers. An information line has also been set up on 01-541 5678.

Speaking on behalf of the Charities at Work consortium, John Mayo, director general of Help the Aged, said: "There is massive potential additional revenue for British charities resulting from this scheme. A major step has been taken and a door opened for all charities, large and small, to make payroll giving work for them."

Monitor Press Features



Star-sized payroll giving from Ringo Starr, his wife, actress Barbara Bach (right) and Sue Cook, presenter of Crimewatch.

First ethnic minorities study

The first ever study of disability and ethnic minorities in London finds that Asian people are deprived of balanced services because of a lack of liaison between organisations for disabled people and community groups.

The local authorities studied have not identified and tackled the specific problems of Asian disabled people.

The situation is all too similar for Afro-Caribbean people with disabilities. Social services departments are sometimes totally unaware of their needs, and the community in turn does not know about the services available, like occupational therapy.

Sometimes, the report says, stereotypes are based on stereotyped beliefs which need to be challenged. For instance, it is generally believed that Afro-

Caribbean people with disabilities are cared for by their families, but a survey in Brent found that 68 per cent of elderly Afro-Caribbeans lived alone.

Disability and Ethnic Minority Communities, published by the Greater London Association for Disabled People, is a study of 3 London boroughs - Brent, Ealing and Lambeth. It demonstrates how little information there is in this area and stresses the need for further exploration. GLAD has appointed 2 workers to help improve voluntary sector and local authority policy, and to initiate self-help groups.

Disability and Ethnic Minority Communities - a Study in Three London Boroughs is available from GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9, 50 pence p&p.

Princess Diana visits ailing Bradford workshop

Telegraph & Argus, Bradford



Princess Diana shared wedding reminiscences with Elsie and Arnold Bayliss (above) when she visited the workshop of Fashion Services for the Disabled near Bradford last month. She saw Elsie's wedding dress and other custom-made clothes and toured the training centre too.

The workshop is in dire need of money. MSC funding ran out last month. "People tell us we do a marvellous job", says Nellie Thornton, the project director, "but no one helps us to get on with it." She is now lobbying MPs. "There is no way you can make a profit and make clothes disabled people can afford," she says, "yet they need the clothes desperately. It's a vicious circle."

"A missed opportunity" on jobs

The first major report on the employment provision for people with disabilities since 1943 has been greeted with disappointment by The Spastics Society.

The report of the National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People (NACEDP) has "failed to confront seriously the problems facing people with disabilities" says the Society. It claims that a golden opportunity has been missed to look into the possibility of anti-discrimination legislation and to recommend a strengthening, not a weakening, of the

quota system.

The Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Employment on the employment of people with disabilities, says it is not the appropriate time to review the legislative framework.

Some practical recommendations do meet with the Society's approval, however. NACEDP backs sheltered placement schemes; says the system for assessing individual work needs should be developed; and recommends a review of sheltered workshops.

Dial-a-Ride needs £30m

London Dial-a-Ride needs £30 million a year to provide a "reasonable" service to its users.

Although it has grown rapidly in the last 7 years and now has 35,000 registered users and 100 vehicles covering all the London boroughs, one user can have, on average, only one trip a month. The present government funding of £5.6 million a year is not enough.

Some 200 users were given this information at the inaugural meeting of the London Dial-a-Ride Users' Association last month. Alan Walker, ex-chairman of the Federation of London Dial-a-Rides which the new association is replacing, said that one aim must be "to increase the quantity of the service offered."

A mass lobby of Parliament is being considered.

Mr Walker was also concerned that Dial-a-Ride is not reaching more potential users. Recent research on transport needs by the Greater London Association for Disabled People revealed that 240,000 disabled people in London need transport. The association must consider how they could reach those people, said Mr Walker.

Guest speaker Rosalie Wilkins, presenter of the TV programme *Link*, believed that transport is the number one issue for disabled people because without it they cannot get together to discuss other issues.

She wanted London Dial-a-Ride to be part of an integrated transport plan for disabled people in London and she contrasted the London services with the fully accessible services in Washington and San Francisco.

A committee was elected with Joan Stephens of Kingston, Richmond and Merton Dial-a-Ride as secretary. A chairman will be elected by the committee.

The London Dial-a-Ride Users' Association, St Margaret's, 25 Leighton Road, London NW5 2QD. Tel: 01-482 2325.

NEIGHBOURS AND NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

Good Neighbours News is a light-hearted newspaper packed full of competitions, puzzles, and quizzes. It costs just £1 a month and a large slice of that £1 goes straight to The Spastics Society.

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Therapy case

A couple who took Oxfordshire Education Authority to court because it would not pay for the speech therapy their son needed, have abandoned their fight after the health authority stepped in to provide the treatment.

They were appealing against a crucial High Court ruling which said that even if an Education Authority stated speech therapy needs, it was not its responsibility to provide them. Nine-year-old Alan Wallace needed 5 speech therapy sessions a week but was only getting three.

Star meets star Effie the sheep-dog, star of the film *Labyrinth* with David Bowie, is the new mascot for John Grooms Association for the Disabled. She had an exuberant greeting for actress Susannah York (left), who is supporting Effie's efforts to raise money for the charity.

Scientists locate defective gene - a step forward in preventing spina bifida

An important breakthrough in research into serious congenital birth defects such as spina bifida has paved the way for reducing the number of affected births in future.

Women who are genetically at risk of having spina bifida children could be identified and environmental factors, such as diet, altered to reduce that risk.

Thousands of children are born each year with "mid-line defects", which happen when part of a foetus's tissue fails to fuse. Spina bifida, cleft palates and anencephaly (a brain defect) are all examples of such defects and are generally triggered by a combination of genetic and environmental factors.

The breakthrough came when

scientists at St Mary's medical hospital in London, led by Professor Robert Williamson, discovered the location of a gene that causes one mid-line defect, a rare form of cleft palate.

The discovery is important for cleft palate-prone families. But the same technique can also be used to pinpoint the genes associated with other mid-line defects such as spina bifida which, unlike cleft palates, cannot be treated by surgery.

Once the defective genes are located, the environmental factors that interact with them to produce the conditions can be traced. Pregnant women known to be at risk can be advised to avoid certain foods, chemicals or drugs.

However, 95 per cent of children with spina bifida are born to women who do not know they are genetically at risk. By developing the technique used by Professor Williamson to pinpoint defective genes, all pregnant women could be screened to identify those predisposed to bear children with spina bifida.

"Until now prevention has been seen primarily in terms of early detection and termination of pregnancy," said Professor Williamson. "I think we will increasingly see this kind of molecular biology research giving the opportunity for genuine prevention."

ALACs shake-up

continued from page 1

available to that authority to use in the wheelchair service...."

Bert Massie, assistant director (disablement services) at RADAR, welcomes the statement, but with caution.

"I'm delighted to see Professor McColl as the vice-chairman, and it is encouraging to see that the chairman himself is disabled. But I would like to see committees of wheelchair users and artificial limb users giving expert advice to the management board."

He is also concerned about the lack of commitment on powered wheelchairs, and wants to know how ALACs will be funded as part of health authorities after 1991.

"Will people who need artificial limbs and wheelchairs be competing with people who need heart transplants?" he asks.

Sterilization

continued from page 1

right answer."

Alison Wertheimer, director of Campaign for People with Mental Handicaps, said she would like to see the ruling reversed.

"It is very hard to argue a case for non-therapeutic sterilisation," she said. "I think this decision has been made with inordinate haste, and I am very concerned that nobody apart from the official solicitor represented the girl's interests in court."

One thing the case has brought to light is that doctors have been sterilising mentally handicapped girls under the age of 18 at their parents' request before now, without court authorisation.

In giving judgement, Lord Justice Dillon said that sterilisation would always have to be justified in court in future.

DN would like to hear what you think about this issue.

The 'Give As You Earn' Scheme.

To The Spastics Society the price of a phone call could be the difference between teaching him to speak, or not.

The 'give as you earn' scheme is a new way to give money to charity. It's tax free, so for every £1 the charity receives, you only have to give 73p.

You can give as little as 25p per week, and with the extra money the taxman gives it'll still amount to a useful sum.

The Spastics Society, along with the NSPCC, Help the Aged, the British Red Cross and the RSPB have formed a group called 'Charities at Work' to promote this scheme.

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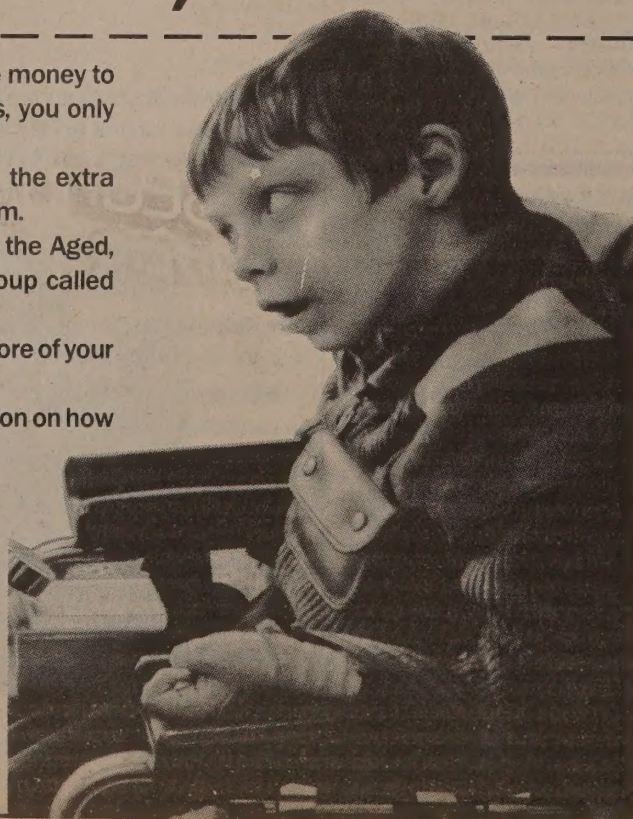
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SSCW 1



What is the European Commission doing for disabled people?

"The European Commission is a civil service which has a political top - the commissioners. It is responsible for making proposals and carrying out policies.

The European Parliament has important budgetary and advisory responsibilities, and under the new "Single European Act" its influence is going to be considerably stronger in the years ahead.

The final decisions are made at the Council of Ministers who are the relevant ministers of the member states meeting in council, eg social affairs, employment, transport.

Traditionally there have been two forms of policy instrument for getting member states to implement European policy: strong ones and weak ones.

Strong ones are Directives, which are rather general but establish superior law over the law of member states so that they have to adapt their legislation, for example, equal opportunity for women in employment. Regulations are a more detailed form of Directive, eg the free movement of workers from one state to another.

Weaker instruments like Recommendations have political but not legal validity - but I don't think we shall see so many of them in the future.

Programmes undertaken by the Commission using the Commission budget will normally have either a weak instrument, a

Pat Daunt, head of the European Commission's Bureau for Action in Favour of Disabled People, talked to Nigel Smith in Brussels earlier this year.

Karen Wingate



Pat Daunt (right) and Nigel Smith.

cil put in a nasty sort of "let out" clause allowing the states to do it if they want to and also blurred the threshold at between 15 and 50 employees.

But don't let's forget that was only the first battle. Member states will have to report back within 2 years and I have little doubt that if they do not show good results the Commission will come forward with limited specific Directives.

then fed back to regional or local centres, even into the living-rooms of disabled people and their families. Anyone who has a compatible computer will be able to tap into it. A consortium of disabled people is already making sure that the access systems to our first European file, on technical aids, can be used by ordinary people.

On the promotion side, the Commission has over the last 4 years been sponsoring 19 district projects to explore the real problems and see what, with a little bit of pump priming, can be done. There have been 2 projects in each of the big member states and one in each of the smaller members. In England the projects were the voluntary organisation, Lambeth Accord and the ITEC programme in W. Berkshire.

There has been an amazing awareness of Europe and col-

laboration developing between the project teams.

Next year we are starting a new programme. We want to have a network of local community projects focussing on employment and training, independent living, education and the co-operation of local services. About 80 local communities in Europe will collaborate to produce models of problems - what you can and can't do. The districts will be selected by civil servants in the ministries.

Last time the UK used a good method: local authority associations were invited to nominate local authorities who would be interested in taking part.

I hope that as a result of the success of our existing projects local authorities will be keen to come forward. We are thinking of about 8 projects spread over the UK.

We have also funded a net-

work of employment rehabilitation centres in Europe and given modest grants for European collaboration by non-government organisations such as associations of disabled people and those who work with them.

We have helped the Euro-Action group of deaf people to set up an electronic mail system between deaf associations in, so far, 3 countries. We helped the European Blind Union develop common symbols for tactile maps throughout Europe, and Cerebral Palsy Overseas and the International Cerebral Palsy Society to run international seminars and conferences.

This kind of relationship is unique for us because it brings us into contact with the doers. Also, voluntary organisations represent and increasingly are the consumers; they can mediate between the consumer and the professional which sometimes causes us problems.

We would certainly support voluntary organisations lobbying the European Commission and the European Parliament. Individual organisations would find the logistics difficult with the assembly in Strasbourg, the committees in Brussels and the secretariat in Luxembourg, but a cooperative lobby would be very welcome to the Commission both to inform British people of what Parliament is doing and to pass on complaints and opinions.

People in Britain haven't realised the importance of making their needs and views felt at a European level.

I think we can look forward to a better life for disabled people in Europe. It's going to happen. But we shall have to fight for it."

Nigel Smith is Community Services Development Manager for The Spastics Society and Disability Now's community transport correspondent.

"People in Britain haven't realised the importance of making their needs and views felt at a European level"

Resolution, if there is not much money involved, or a Decision, which is a strong instrument, if there is a lot of money.

The Bureau for Action in Favour of Disabled People was the result of a Decision by the European Council in 1981 - the International Year of Disabled People - to set up a completely new programme to promote the social and economic integration of disabled people, based on proposals from the European Commission supported by the European Parliament.

The Bureau is a unit in the Commission with a basic staff of 6 and a budget of about £2.5 million a year.

Unlike the governments of member states, we have a single programme which covers education, training, employment and most aspects of independent living within one budget and one management, though we do have to look to other departments for transport and new technologies.

To fulfil our general aims we have to take action in three fields: policy, information and promotion (where we use money to promote activities and exchange experiences at grass roots level in member states).

We got through our first policy instrument last year which was a Recommendation on the employment of disabled people.

Yes, it was watered down. The Parliament took a very strong position in favour of a uniform 5 per cent quota throughout the Community. The Commission took a middle line - we did not believe 5 per cent was realistic; frankly, you cannot sell quotas to the Danes. We wanted a quota system that insisted that all public and private enterprises with more than 20 employees would be subject to a target which would be publicised. The Coun-

It is true that in the past one member state could veto a Directive, but under the Single European Act there are now regulations which permit a majority decision and there is very powerful support now for a sensible quota system.

This seminar on transport you are attending, Nigel, is to advise the Commission on proposals for a European Community instrument to promote the mobility of disabled people and ensure improved standards in Europe. It may end as a Recommendation to the Parliament, and ultimately to the Council, or something stronger. The European Commission has the right of comment or statement at every point, so we can follow the whole process through.

The fact that people with expert knowledge, including disabled people, are here for the seminar gives weight to our proposals. We can say to our political masters, 'You have got to take your responsibilities seriously; if you are going to say no to this you will have to do so in public.' That is the proper exercise of democracy and we are trying to make European democracy work.

European democracy has the disadvantage of not having a single party leadership for a fixed period: with so many representatives from different political shades we have to find compromises. On the other hand, we don't have to go down any one road for long.

If we go back to the Bureau's fields of action and look at information, the Commission has been developing Handynet, a database which over the next 20 years or so will service a European network of centres giving information about disability. The data will come from grass roots level, be collected centrally and

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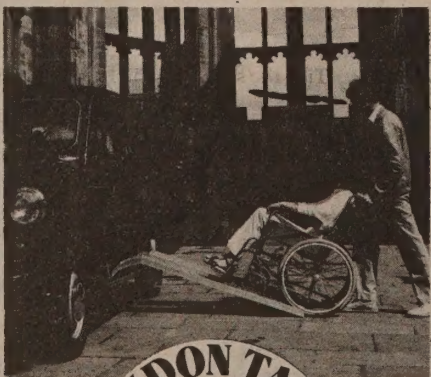
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The delicious smell of fresh-baked quiche drifted out the door of 16 Tudor Green as it was opened wide by a smiling David Finnigan. Inside I was warmly greeted by Charlie Daniels, dapper in a bow tie, and John Gillingham, who had been putting the finishing touches to the beautifully laid table.

The tidy, homely bungalow reflected the cheerful personalities of the three inhabitants, a tribute to how far they have come in the past 6 months.

David Finnigan, 34, John Gillingham, 39 and Charlie Daniels, 42, have cerebral palsy. They are all mildly physically disabled and, in varying degrees, deaf. They have little speech, but using some Makaton and plenty of expressive body language they are able to communicate very effectively.

For most of their adult lives they lived at The Spastics Society's residential centre, Jacques Hall, at Bradfield in Essex, a large old manor house set in 23 acres of countryside, 5 miles from the nearest town.

When the Hall was closed last year as part of the Society's commitment to the care in the community philosophy, most residents moved to the Clacton Project centre on the seafront in the heart of the town. But Charlie, David and John began a new, independent life in their own bungalow, a mile and a half away.

Preparation for the move had begun about a year before. From the start the men were very keen. They had known each other for years, working in the gardens at Jacques Hall, and tended to stick together, being more independent than most of the other residents because of their physical mobility.

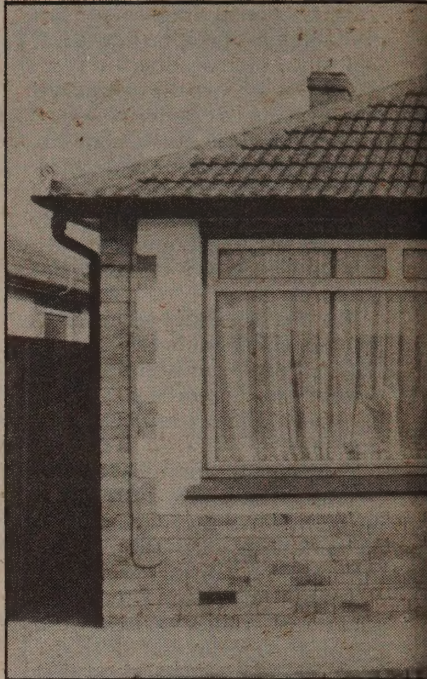
"When it came to deciding who would live in the bungalow, they were the obvious choice," explained project organiser Kevin Ashton.

The men learned to cook at a cottage on the Jacques Hall estate and two or three times a week prepared a meal for themselves and an invited member of staff. They also went on shopping trips and learned to select what they would need for meals, and how to handle money.

From the beginning the men were involved in fitting out the bungalow. As they are mobile it did not need any major alterations, but smoke detectors were installed for added safety.

Choosing the furniture and decoration also provided a lesson in the cost of living. "Every

A place



Charlie Daniels, David Finnigan and John Gillingham, three years in residential care, now in ordinary housing estate. See how they are meeting the challenge.

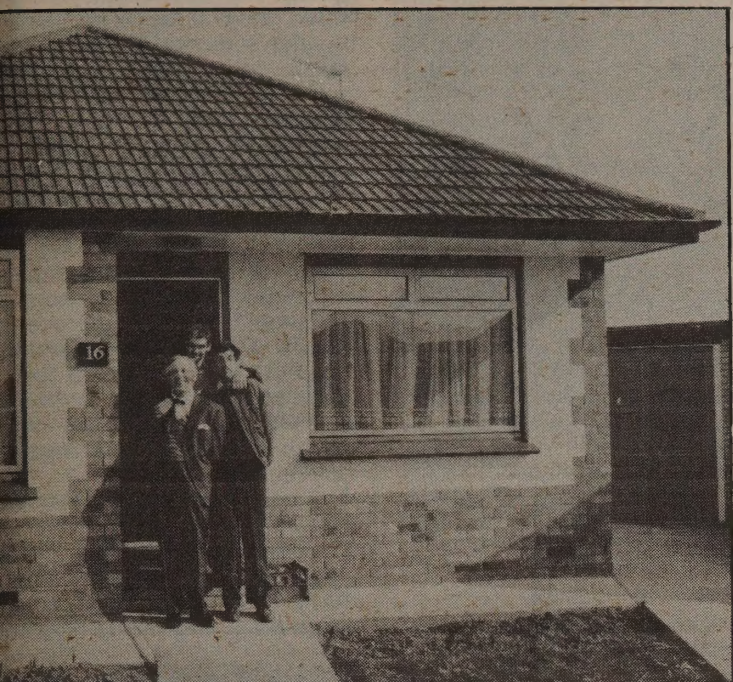


David Finnigan puts his back into setting up the lawnmower. The bungalow has a large garden which was very overgrown when the men moved in.



The table was already set for lunch - quiche, baked potatoes and salad, followed by cheesecake. The men cook all their own meals and shop once a week at the market in town. From left to right: John Gillingham, David Finnigan, Charlie Daniels, Karen Wingate of Disability Now and Kevin Ashton, project organiser.

call their own



gan and John Gillingham spent over 20 years moving into a bungalow on an estate in Clacton, Essex. Karen Wingate went to the challenge of living in the community.



"One sugar please" John Gillingham tells Charlie Daniels. The three men have little speech, but they are able to communicate very effectively with a mixture of Makaton and expressive body language.

time I came to visit they would be poring over catalogues, choosing new things for the house," said Kevin Ashton. "I had to explain there was not a bottomless pit of money!"

When they first moved in the men were given money each time they needed to go shopping. Now they are doing their own "supervised" budgeting with £40 a week for food. They decided themselves that one big shop a week, topped up with visits to the local shops, made more sense than buying things daily. Now they take the bus to Tesco to buy a week's supplies.

As David, Charlie and John showed me around the bungalow they explained how their lives had changed in the past six months. Initially it was agreed that one member of staff from the Clacton Project centre on Marine Parade would always be with them, but as they grew more confident the men found this awkward and restricting. By their own choice they are now left to themselves during the day, although someone sleeps in the bungalow with them at night.

This will only change when the men feel ready for it. "We don't want to push them too much," said Kevin Ashton. "We will only go as fast as they want."

The institutional habit of asking permission for everything took a little while to break, but now the men are used to doing things under their own steam.

They were given the option of eating at the new centre, but have chosen to cook all their meals themselves. Even at Christmas they declined an invitation to the centre and cooked their own turkey, complete with champagne and crackers, before joining the others for a party afterwards.

During the day, when the household chores of cooking, cleaning and laundry are done, the men find plenty to keep them busy. They firmly denied any suggestion that they might be bored or lonely.

Sometimes they take a bus or walk to the centre for a swim in

the pool. David and John are both keen boccia players, but Charlie prefers to work in the garden. With help from the other two the tangle they faced on moving in has been cleared and the grass cut. Charlie has planted daffodils and tulips, just beginning to show their heads above the soil, and has sowed peas, onions and beans for the summer. In time, said Kevin Ashton, they may be able to make some money gardening for others on the housing estate.

In the evenings the three often go to their local pub, within walking distance, and have a game of pool. They say they have made friends and are greeted warmly there.

Apart from the usual ups and downs faced by anyone sharing a house, which has nothing to do with their disability, the three men get on very well and are enjoying their independence.

John, who used to get angry and frustrated with life at Jacques Hall, has been much happier in the last 6 months. A quieter person than the other two, he clearly values the privacy his new life affords.

One of the biggest worries before the move was how the local people would react to their new neighbours. But the worry proved needless. To one side lives a lady of 88, who said she was delighted to have the three men next door. "I lost my husband many years ago and I've been looking for another," she told Kevin Ashton with a twinkle in her eye. According to the men, people are friendly and say hello when they see them. The man in the local shop is also very helpful, they said.

David, John and Charlie have succeeded in their move into the community together, but each would have had a much harder time alone. "Their characters and strengths complement each other, which helps a lot," said Kevin Ashton.

Senior residential social worker, Mick Dorman, who has known the men for several years said: "After the number of years they spent at Jacques Hall I marvel at the way they have managed. At last they have a place of their own."

After a lovely lunch, David and John set off to play boccia, while Charlie stayed behind to clear away and wash up. As we waved goodbye and drove off, Kevin Ashton told me that only a year ago Charlie would have been horrified to have been left all alone. "Now he is quite happy to stay behind - that's a measure of how far they've come," he said.

The secret of their success may lie in not setting rigid goals, but in letting the men move at their own pace, he added. "People ask me what the next move is. I say I don't know - let's wait and see."



All the men are keen gardeners and have spent a lot of time getting the garden in shape. They plan to have a barbecue in the summer and invite friends from the Marine Parade centre.



Charlie Daniels is proud of his green thumb, and spends a lot of time in the greenhouse and garden. The daffodil and tulip bulbs he planted will soon be in bloom, and he has sown a vegetable garden with peas, beans and onions.

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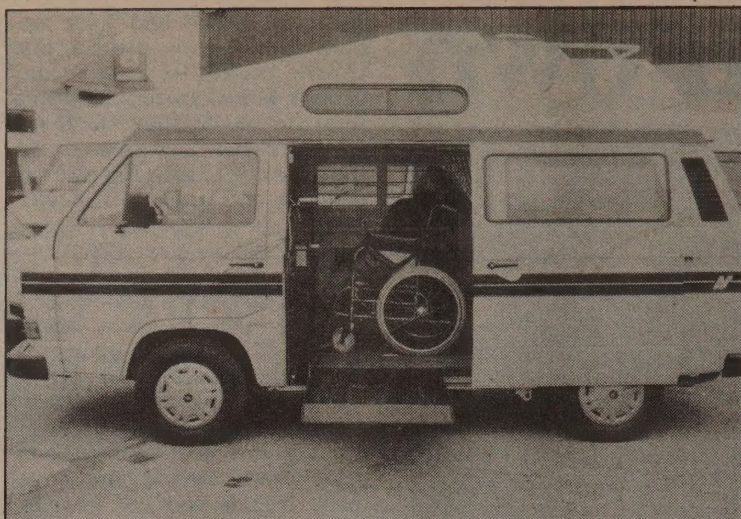
Bromley Motor Caravans are not unique in adapting motor caravans for people in wheelchairs, but unlike other companies, their newly converted Volk-

swagen Autosleeper can be bought ready adapted without a lengthy made-to-measure wait.

The Autosleeper has a lift which is simple to operate - pressing one button not only raises the lift but folds it away. The passenger seat swivels so that someone can transfer from the wheelchair. The steering has orthodox hand control adaptations.

Inside the caravan there is enough room to avoid claustrophobia, but since the wheelchair is parked directly beside the work surface, it would be difficult to reach the cooker or fridge unless the disabled person was moved outside.

The whole of this automatic model converts into a giant bunkbed, the roof area becom-



Chris Davies tries the Volkswagen Autosleeper for size. The lift folds away at the push of a button.

Philip Harris

ing the top tier.

For people who are more independently mobile than I am, such as those with spinal injuries, the Autosleeper could solve their holiday problems. But for someone like me, who needs more help, additional space is needed, perhaps an extended awning.

The Autosleeper has a super-cooled 1.6 diesel engine, and averages about 27 miles per gallon. It costs £14,152. No VAT because it is an adapted vehicle.

See for yourself if it is worth the money. It will be on show at The Motor Caravan Jamboree at Brands Hatch Racing Circuit, Brands Hatch, Kent, 25-26 April.

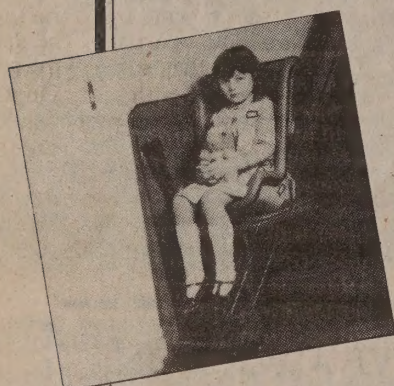
PS Bromley Motor Caravans will adapt any Volkswagen caravan to individual requirements on request.

Chris Davies

Bromley Motor Caravans, 55/56 Abbey Road, Belvedere, Kent, DA17 5DG, tel: 01-311 3500.

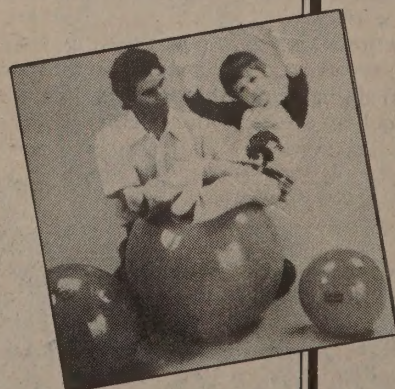
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BOOKS

Lipreading: A guide for beginners

by John Chaloner Woods
(John Murray, £3.95)

This book is aimed at people who have acquired hearing impairment. It will also be useful to those who work and live with deaf people.

John Chaloner Woods is himself hearing impaired and a "graduate of lip reading classes". His book has been written as a supplement to the classes of which he is a firm advocate. It guides the beginner through the first steps of acquiring lip reading skill and provides back-up exercises for successful learning. The introduction and first chapter, written out of his own experiences, give an idea of what to expect from a hearing aid and the classes.

Most of the book is concerned with exercises that help develop the skill. Excellent photos taken by the author (he was a professional photographer) illustrate lip shapes and are very helpful "signposts".

There are useful sections on the hearing aid, ear wax and the loop system, tips for family and friends on lip speaking and a list of addresses.

The style is easy to read and encouraging for the beginner.

Janet Swan
Senior speech therapist
Beaumont College

My Way of Living

by Carol Millbanks
(Gateway Project, St Lukes, Sawley Road, Miles Platting, Manchester, 75p + Postage)

Carol has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair. Her intention in writing this book was "to show the general public that disabled people can live a really active life". Carol has done just that. She reminisces about her childhood in Gorton, special school education and employment at Beaumont Products in Blackley. She has been a bridesmaid, travelled to Venice, set up and run a social club for disabled people and raised funds for charity by taking part in wheelchair marathons. Her account of her life is interspersed with arguments for greater social integration and illustrated with photographs.

Helen Gray

OUTLOOK

FILMS

Duet for One

As a sufferer of multiple sclerosis, I had put off going to *Duet for One* as I remembered being upset by the television version. Not because I hadn't come to terms with the illness myself, but because I couldn't swallow the fact that Stephanie (the lady who had to give up the violin due to manual weakness) played by Julie Andrews, was able to leave her wheelchair and walk normally.

I understand there are people with MS who can stand although confined to a wheelchair, but I know of no-one (as yet) who is able to leave the wheelchair and walk normally for a short distance before falling.

I put this question to Dr Alexandra Burnfield, was worked as adviser on the film, during an interview, and his answer clarified the whole film for me: "You're quite right. It isn't MS, but in fact in this part of the film Stephanie is very frightened about MS and has over-identified with it and sat in a wheelchair more than she needed to, and I hope that comes over".

I didn't feel it came over immediately, but it is interesting to look at the MS condition from a psychiatrist's chair.

It is perhaps one of the most difficult conditions to come to terms with due to its variability. Stephanie summed it up in the film when she said, "I'm in the chair because I have multiple sclerosis" - not because she was unable to walk. To me this comment had more to do with this wonderful phrase "coming to terms" with the disease, which she wasn't able to do until, I believe, the end of the film.

The other point which I felt uncomfortable about was the repeated suggestion that she might



Isabelle Huppert and Robert Menzies as Colo and Robert in *Cactus*.

die of MS. As far as I know, at the present time you cannot die of MS but you could die from a complication as a result of it, or from any of the fatal diseases common to everyone.

Stephanie's acceptance of the disease came later in the film when she started packing away her music, photographs and trophies - something which for many people must have seemed sacrilegious.

She has a sexual relationship with a scrap metal dealer, which isn't surprising when you take into account the fact that her husband left her to go abroad with his secretary.

She started listening to popular music. But her memories caught up with her and after making the mistake of watching a video of herself playing the violin, she attempted suicide.

In another scene with her psychiatrist she said, "I can't understand why I'm not afraid. Music gives so much pleasure to people to show them the eternity of life".

It's a shame she didn't decide to take music workshops for Shape or put her new-found knowledge to work with disabled people. I think she would have come to terms with it much sooner.

It's a fascinating film which

means so much more when you have a disability yourself, as it stops being a money-making tear jerker and starts being a positive way of coping.

Isobel Ward
One in Four

Cactus

The experience of becoming disabled has been treated on celluloid before: *Coming Home*, *Whose Life is it Anyway?* and now *Duet for One*. But any real insight into the traumas involved or the transformation of world view that disability might bring is too often drowned in a flood of glycerine tears or buried in a tale of triumph over adversity.

Cactus, directed by Australian Paul Cox, avoids the many pitfalls seemingly without trying. It is restrained but unconventional, tough but affecting, and it refused to make glib generalisations about blindness.

French actress Isabelle Huppert plays Colo, who, whilst holidaying in Australia, loses the sight of one eye in a car crash. In danger of losing the sight of her other eye through a sympathetic reaction, her host Tom persuades her to meet Robert who has been blind since birth and lives nearby. Although initially

reluctant to be together, they become increasingly dependent on each other both physically and psychologically.

Cactus is a love story. It never stretches credibility, and many scenes of mundane but quirky small-town life have a documentary-like realism. The two central characters are far from exceptional. Robert shows no particular talents, beauty or charm. He grows cacti. Like the cactus he can be spikey and intolerant: "People only trust us because we can't see them," he says. But also like the cactus he is deceptively vulnerable, and the coming of Colo and love into his previously highly regulated life has quite a devastating effect.

Colo, in turn, has to confront her confusion and vanity. Her passage into a new way of life is impressively conjured up by increasingly blurred (but no less beautiful) images of the Australian Bush, by grainy cine-film memories intercutting the action more and more frequently, and by a heightened sense of sound.

For a sighted person at least, *Cactus* seems an acute account of not just a disability but how that disability relates to life as it is lived. One of Robert's rare moments of home-spun philosophy sticks in the mind. "When you become blind you stop living in front of things and live with them."

The acting is impressive all round, and Robert Menzies gives a convincing impersonation of a man who cannot see. It only seems a shame that a sighted actor got the part, when the world must be full of young people with visual handicaps dying to get a break into acting.

Simon Crompton

Cactus: future dates

29 April-3 May	Cornerhouse, Manchester
19-23 May	Rendezvous Cinema, Portsmouth
30 May-2 June	Chapter Cinema, Cardiff

Children of a Lesser God, starring Marlee Matlin and William Hurt, went on general release on 20 March and will be reviewed in Disability Now next month.

THEATRE

Molded

Two lonely people, each locked away from the world outside, one by deafness, the other in an American gaol. The girl communicates through dance; the prisoner cannot communicate at all.

The two are brought together when the girl's dance company performs in the prison and the prisoner laughs at her dance. She is so hurt by the laughter that she determines to find out what caused it.

She visits the prisoner several times. At last, by sharing her pain and the experience of being molested by her father, she frees him to speak of his pain and loneliness and the murders that have landed him in prison.

"I can't live in a mould. I can't have people mould me - I fight," he tells her.

"If we can't break the mould, then we will walk through it," she tells him. And that is what they do.

We only saw part of Terrylene

Theriot's award-winning play last month, when it was performed as a playreading at the University of London's Studio Theatre. But even as an excerpt it had tremendous impact, partly because Terrylene Theriot (who is deaf herself) juxtaposed dialogue with sign language - and American Sign Language is so expressive.

When the girl, played by Elizabeth Quinn (of *Children of a Lesser God*), signed to a deaf friend, backed up by a literal "pidgin" translation off stage, or when she talked to the prisoner through an on-stage interpreter, you could "hear" the sign language and begin to feel the secondary importance of words.

There was a vivid moment when she recounted a dream of running free through the woods to a cliff edge and then finding herself in a shoe store rejecting shoes by their looks. "Me feel shoes like disabled people. Me look at shoes like people judge me."

New work by two young British playwrights with disabilities was also in the programme.

Marie Oshodi's *Double Rough* caught the world's hurtful responses to Ben's sickle-cell anaemia as well as the physical pain, while Tony Newton gave us a convincing portrait of a partially deaf teenager who is taken into care and then discovers that



Mrs Jean Kennedy Smith of VSA (right) gave awards to (from left) Marie Oshodi, Tony Newton and Terrylene Theriot.

his favourite carer will only cuddle him when she is on duty. There is hope that the guilt engendered in the carer may drive her to reveal the hypocrisies of the institutional "home", but *Gizza Say* is still incomplete.

The question of how plays like these can find the subsidies to achieve production was broached afterwards by David Sulkin, ex-director of the Royal Court Young People's Theatre and director of this project. But the audience had no answers.

The readings, and the workshops that preceded them, were funded by Very Special Arts, an international organisation affiliated to the John F Kennedy Cen-

ter for the Performing Arts in Washington. Founded in 1974 by JFK's sister, Jean Kennedy Smith, VSA runs artistic programmes for disabled people in the USA and coordinates projects and festivals around the world.

The UK, it seems, has not been fruitful ground: the only programme to take root is a regular exchange of plays between VSA and the Royal Court Young People's Theatre.

Mary Wilkinson

PS Terrylene Theriot, now aged 20, is also an actress and a dancer. See her in an episode of *Cagney and Lacey*, "Right to be Silent," on 25 May.



Ironside gave me a new sense of possibility

I write this column because I love television. Ever since I can remember TV has been an important influence on me. Even though it is difficult to pinpoint, I suspect the first time I became aware of its significance was when the BBC originally transmitted *Ironside*.

On 9 March BBC1 began a series of daytime re-runs of *Ironside*. I watched it with mixed feelings, wondering whether I was about to be disillusioned.

It is difficult to say exactly why the series was so important to me. Probably it was because it was the first time that a character with whom I could identify had been placed in an heroic role. My memory tells me that *Ironside* was never allowed to do things that someone with spinal injury could not do. Although the chief of detectives has experiences that most people don't, the character still stays within the limitations of his disability.

The series dates from the Sixties and the early episodes were shown in black and white.

Does it stand up to the test of time? Only partially. The action is slower than some of the series these days, with more emphasis on dialogue. The plots would be handled visually in a very different way today.

But one thing was exactly as I remembered it: the granite-like authority of *Ironside* himself. Partly due to the wimpish nature of his assistants, but mainly rooted in the astute acting of Raymond Burr, Robert T. Ironside is a true hero in all senses of the word. He once gave me a new sense of possibility; surely others as well. Quite an achievement for a TV cop.

Am I the best person to review *Hand in Hand* (C4, 22 February)? Its audience was children without hearing, such as those in the studio. No matter how the producers intend to involve hearing viewers, I suspect that those who get most from it are those with hearing loss. Nevertheless, I enjoyed it.

Of the two made-for-television movies shown recently, *The Ordeal of Bill Carney* (C4, 24 February) was better than *Two of a Kind* (BBC2, 10 March). The C4 film was a dramatised account of an actual test case which changed American law in favour of disabled parents, allowing them to care for their children. It had sentimental touches, but remained factual. The other film was all sentiment and undilutedly sweet.

One In Four (BBC2, 2 March) has improved in its new format. The items are longer and more telling. It still lacks the bite of LINK, but there is hope.

Chris Davies

Look out for . . .
Pictures of the Mind (C4, 6 April) on education for deaf people.

One In Four (BBC2, 7 April) featuring Amanda Bullion who modelled *DN's* Christmas fashion.

Getting your garden going

"I like gardening and I can content myself with it. Now if you get anybody who does gardening and likes it, they can lose themselves for hours and hours in a garden. They might not do a lot, but they can lose themselves!"

Mrs Ann Loder is in her 80s and lives in the centre of Bath, where her tiny cottage garden full of tubs and raised beds delights the passersby. You can read about her garden in the spring issue of *Growth Point*, a magazine which is sent to members of the charity Horticultural Therapy.

Mrs Loder has found the sec-



Pull a hanging basket down to your height with the help of a "Hi-Lo". The range of movement is 2½ ft and the device locks in any position. £5 from Par-Fox Products, High Street, Tanneas Lane, Golborne, Warrington, Cheshire.

ret of gardening: it isn't how much you can do, but the pleasure of being with plants, seeing them grow, and then reaping the rewards — flowers, herbs, strawberries.

Having a disability need be no bar to gardening. "Gardening is for everyone" says Horticultural Therapy's leaflet; it's a matter of adapting your gardening to suit your disability.

First of all you need inspiration. Next month's Chelsea Flower Show (20-22 May) should give you that. Besides all the stands, for the first time there will be a scented garden for blind and partially sighted people,

Whether you want raised beds, pot plants or a full scale garden, there's plenty of inspiration and advice available. Mary Wilkinson offers ideas

ple, organised by the London Association for the Blind and sponsored by Johnson Wax. Peter Rogers, an award-winning landscape architect, will provide a "mosaic" of scents, textures and sounds. There will be raised flower beds and strategically placed seats indicated by textured surfaces on the ground.

Help the Aged will also have a garden on the theme of water. A rare gold Busy Lizzie (*Impatiens*) is being flown in from Australia. The rose, Help the Aged, launched at last year's show, will be on Stand 46 in the marquee.

Other shows we have heard of are the World of Gardening Show at the Brighton Centre (9-12 April, 10am-8pm) which includes new planter designs of particular interest to people in wheelchairs, and a fortnight when gardens in Cornwall are open to the public (19 April to 4 May) organised by the Cornwall Garden Society which is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Thorngrove Centre, a horticultural and agricultural centre run by The Spastics Society in Gillingham, Dorset, has an open day on 16 May (1-5pm) when you can look round the house and grounds (including a large area of heated glass) and buy summer bedding plants, geraniums, fuchsias and shrubs. Seeing how 28 people with varying disabilities can operate a successful commercial enterprise — the shop at Thorngrove took over £25,000 last year — shows you what can be done.

Demonstration gardens are a good source of inspiration and advice. There is one at the Royal Horticultural Society gardens at Wisley in Surrey and two in the London area run by Horticultural Therapy — in Battersea Park and in Syon Park, Brentford. The Wednesday Club Garden for physically disabled gardeners was opened recently at the Capel Manor Institute of Horticulture in Waltham Cross, Hert-

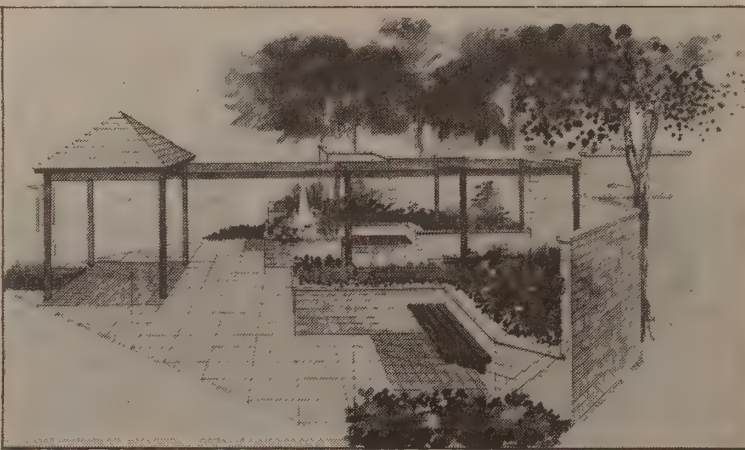
fordshire, and the Bucks Association for Gardening with Disabled People has a garden in Hampden Hall, Stoke Mandeville.

If you would like more sustained help, there are study days or weekends (which extend to professionals working with disabled people too) organised by various organisations. For example, the Advisory Committee for Blind Gardeners has events planned at Plumpton Agricultural College, Lewes, East Sussex, and the Extra-Mural Studies department at the University of Bristol is running week-long residential summer schools for blind and partially sighted adults.

Joining a gardening club will bring new friends and help with gardening problems. The RNIB gives financial support to local gardening clubs for projects like a greenhouse or more tools.

The revised edition of the Mary Marlborough Lodge booklet on gardening in the famous Equipment for the Disabled series is published next month and in it David Hollinrake of the Research Garden Department covers many areas of gardening, including garden clubs. He writes about garden design, planting a garden, patio and indoor gardening, gardening for food — and for profit! — and gives appropriate tools for each type of gardening. There are plenty of illustrations of new as well as established equipment.

Several good books exist for



Peter Rogers' design for "the scented glade" at this year's Chelsea Flower Show. It is specially for blind people.

Pauline Ashley has joined British Telecom's Action for Disabled Customers, a committee of BT managers and independent members with a special knowledge of the needs of disabled people.

Mrs Ashley, wife of Jack Ashley MP, is chairman of the Institute of Laryngology (disorders of the larynx) and Otology's (disorders of hearing) management committee at the Royal Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital.

She is also a member of the Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte Special Health Authority.

In 1983 Mrs Ashley founded the Hearing and Speech Trust which is sponsoring research into the cause and prevention of deafness, noise-induced deafness and the prevention of deafness in premature babies.



TV personality Penelope Keith (second from right) was at the demonstration garden in Battersea Park last month on behalf of Horticultural Therapy to receive J Arthur Bower garden care products from Peter Barton (left) managing director of the manufacturers, Sinclair Horticultural and Leisure. With them are members of the Battersea Social Education Centre who often come to the garden.

disabled gardeners. For blind gardeners, the RNIB has revised *Gardening without sight*, available in print or braille. There is also a quarterly magazine, *The Gardener* for blind people which is available in braille or on tape. Finally, for gardeners who can't fetch their own manure, it can now come by post (with no smell!) Cowpact will also supply peat and compost.

One of the best spin-offs from gardening is the pleasure it gives to other people. As Mrs Loder says, "There's so much bricks and mortar about and I think 'Well, there are a lot of people that admire a few flowers.'"

Horticultural Therapy, Goulds Ground, Vallis Way, Frome, Somerset BA11 3DW, tel (0373) 64782 offers advice, a library and information service, voluntary garden advisors, study days and project services. The Garden Club, hon. sec. Mrs M Haines, Church Cottage, Headcorn, Kent TN27 9NP, tel: (0622) 890467 is a national body which aims to encourage gardening by disabled people. Members receive a quarterly newsletter and advice. Grants may be made for gardening projects and equipment.

Mary Marlborough Lodge, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Headington, Oxford OX3 7LD, tel: (0865) 64811. Gardening will be £3.95 plus 80p post and packaging.

Capel Manor Horticultural and Environmental Centre (Adrian Pyatt), Bullsmoor Lane, Waltham Cross, Herts EN7 5HR, tel: (0992) 763849 is open each week day 9.30am-4.30pm and from 19 April on weekends 10.30am-5.30pm.

RNIB (Chris Attrill, Sports and Leisure Officer), 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA, tel: 01-388 1266.

Cowpact Ltd, Hollingdon, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 0DN, tel: (052527) 506.

PEOPLE



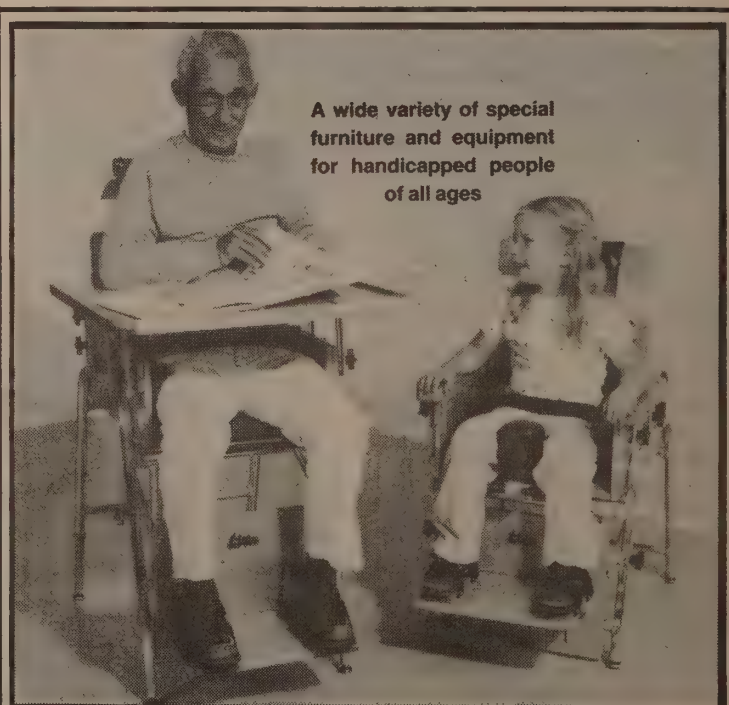
Dr Brian Stratford (centre) has been made a Knight of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great for his services to Down's Syndrome internationally.

He was invested in Nottingham University Chapel by the Bishop of Nottingham on 13 March. Dr Stratford's wife Maureen was also there. The honour, given to only 150 people in the world at any one time, is awarded by the Pope.

Dr Stratford, a lecturer in special education at the University of Nottingham, has travelled the world lecturing, advising and

consulting on Down's Syndrome, spending time in Hong Kong, Italy, Sicily, Mexico, Africa, India, Australia and Eastern Europe.

He is chairman of the Research Council of the Down's Syndrome Association of Great Britain, adviser to the Down's Syndrome Association of Hong Kong, both director and chairman of the Society for the Scientific Study of Persons with a mental Handicap in Hong Kong, and chairman of the European Down's Syndrome Association.



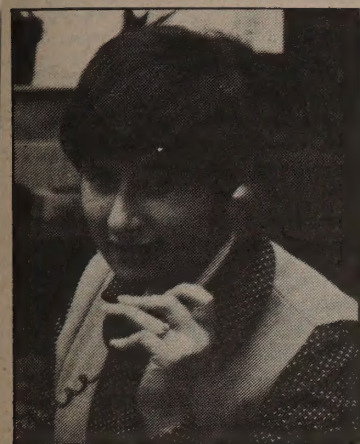
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Happy birthday!



This month Lin Berwick celebrates two anniversaries: her first year as *DN's* telephone counsellor and her 37th birthday. She's also getting married soon.

The first telephone counselling service for disabled people and their families sponsored by *Disability Now* has been operating for a year. In that time I have taken calls from over 100 people in all parts of the country - even Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The problems have been as wide ranging as the places they have come from. Marriage break-up; concern for the children; body image with particular reference to forming relationships with people of the opposite sex; over-attachment to a carer of the same sex; fear of lesbianism; fear of loneliness, especially when exchanging residential care for independent living.

Some calls have been for practical help. Someone wanted to know where he could get a pair of trousers made because he had one leg fatter than the other. Last month another person wanted castors with a locking device that could be fitted to his arm chair.

All the calls are treated in strict confidence; although I make notes about the difficulties raised by a caller, no names are mentioned.

Time and again people tell me that they have wanted to ring for weeks but felt their problem was too trivial or they were too embarrassed. I am not there to make judgements, just to listen and try to help. Sometimes it seems to be easier if a member of the family rings first about a problem and that paves the way for the person with the problem to phone later.

Some people are put off by the cost of calls. But have you thought how much a one-to-one counselling session would cost? In London it ranges from £5 to £15 an hour for a qualified counsellor. Add on your travelling expenses and it becomes a costly, time-consuming business. A phone call to me (a qualified counsellor) from anywhere in the country at off peak times can work out much cheaper.

People have asked whether they may call more than once. Of course! In fact some of the callers are becoming old friends.

But please try to keep calls within the specified times - 1-5 pm on Mondays, and 6-10 pm on Thursdays.

Because I have a disability myself - I am blind and have cerebral palsy - I do understand the needs of disabled people and I am also aware of the pressures on their families.

So if you have a problem, do ring. "A trouble shared is a trouble halved."

Lin's telephone number is (04024) 58325.

So much equipment designed for people with disabilities is dull and functional and presented by manufacturers in an uninspiring way. By contrast, the 430 exhibitors at the Ideal Home Exhibition last month were out to catch our eye and our purses; their stands were attractive, their sales pitch persuasive. The whole setting was luxurious. We found it very refreshing.

We couldn't get round the whole exhibition in one day, but even so we found enough gadgets and equipment to make the trip worthwhile.

There were only one or two people in wheelchairs which seems a pity since Earls Court is fully accessible with parking for disabled people right outside. So long as you take care negotiating the "humps" in the aisles (conduits for the electrical wiring) it is easy to get round. There are



Karristicks can carry a basket, a suitcase or even a dustbin. It can be steered round corners and folds up easily, but won't give a lot of support. In cheerful colours, £24.95, from Martek Ltd, PO Box 20, Redruth, Cornwall TR15 2UF, tel: (0209) 219911.

1987 DAILY MAIL IDEAL HOME EXHIBITION

Practical ideas in a luxury setting

Merle Davies and Marianne West let themselves go

plenty of places to sit - and lots of bars. We found the food poor, though, and would take our own next time - which would also save queuing.

It was worth starting early before the rush builds up around noon and leaving before the next rush at 5 o'clock. It also pays to

sit down with the catalogue and guide to plan what to see rather than drifting aimlessly or doubling back on your tracks.

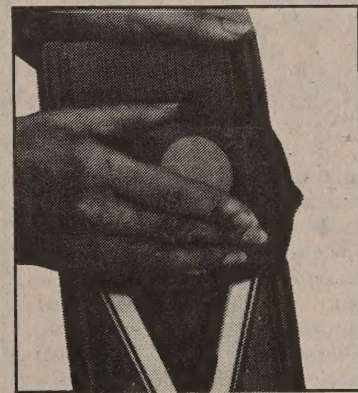
We found most exhibitors helpful. Some, like the Electricity Council (which has a useful booklet, *Making Life Easier for Disabled People*) provided a



Belling's new *Triplette* is a microwave oven which also browns food at the same time. Neat, compact, with easy touch controls. £369 from Electricity Board shops and large stores.

The battery-operated *Massage Pillow* (not shown) was such a good idea that we both bought one. Put it wherever you need soothing. There's a choice of 10 pillow colours. £17.95 (incl p&p) from Orbit Enterprises, PO Box 38, Northwood, Middx HA6 3RY.

Mira has a new *Electronic Bathroom Control* (not shown) for bath, shower, bidet and basin operated by touch. So far the stuff of dreams at about £2,000, but maybe one day...

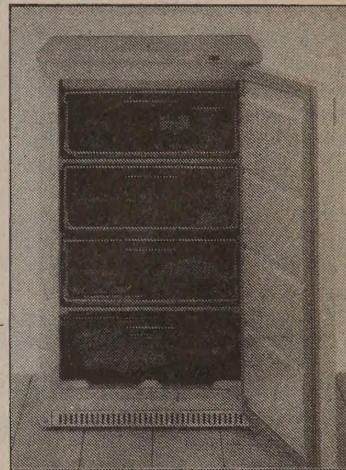


ramp to their stand. One or two, like the salesman at Adjustamatic Beds - wonderful angle-adjustable beds costing £1,700 upwards - welcomed us enthusiastically.

But others had clearly given little thought to the needs of disabled people. Valhalla Homes, for example, had a "Granny flat" which sounded promising. But when we came to see it, it was just a compact flat unsuitable for a person with a walking aid, let alone a wheelchair. "It's for an active granny", said the lady on the stand.

If more people with disabilities went to the exhibition, we are sure manufacturers would respond. The assumption that all disabled people are needy and have no money to spend at places like this must be challenged.

Here are some of our "finds".



The *Tricity 4 cu ft freezer* (model FD406) was excellent for someone in a wheelchair. 3 baskets and 1 drawer pulled out easily. £164.99.

Touchlock (not shown) is a new electronic door-locking system which uses a 4-digit code instead of a door key. Various types from £125 upwards, from The London Lock and Safe Company, 151 Clapton Common, London E5 9AE.

The *Borner V-slicer* (left) was another gadget we bought. You impale the vegetable on the easy-to-hold safety holder and away you go. £14.99 from William E Selkin, 12 Ludlow Hill Rd, W. Bridgford, Nottingham.

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Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

"Is it who you know or what you know that counts?"

The policies and procedures of voluntary organisations are often not fully understood and give rise to questions.

People should feel free to say what they think and the following two letters I have received about The Spastics Society raise important issues.

I have consulted the Society's social services and education divisions to check the situation.

"I am on the waiting list for Neath Hill, but I understand that there is a long wait, which could run into years. Is there any way in which the delay could be shortened or are there any circumstances which those who make the allocations might take into account? Or is it just a case of 'wait and see'?"

It seems to me that places in the Society's centres are getting harder and harder to find. Is it, possibly, that it is not *what* you know, but *who* you know that counts? I went to two of the Society's schools and some of my friends' parents are on various committees of The Spastics Society. A lot of my friends now have places at the centres. This is not meant as a criticism, just an observation."

You are right, it is getting harder to find places within some of the Society's services.

The number of applications from adolescents and adults has increased greatly in the last few years and there is an especially heavy demand for smaller, community-based homes. As a result, some applicants do have to wait a long time for a vacancy. Allocating vacancies is not,

however, a simple number exercise. It is about ensuring that the wishes of individuals are met and that each placement is the most appropriate one available.

The Society's units vary both in the type of service provided and in their location. Sometimes, indeed, a placement in a Society unit is *not* the most suitable one for a particular individual. All those concerned, however, emphasise that recognised procedures and criteria are used for assessing needs and priorities and there is no question of decisions being influenced by family or other personal connections.

It is, of course, likely that those who are on committees will be more aware of new developments than those who are not directly involved and so they may get applications in sooner. Individual needs are, however, very carefully investigated and weighed up and, for perfectly acceptable reasons, some applicants will have shorter waits than others.

I would advise you to ask your area social worker about your own positions, explaining your special priorities. I do hope that your turn will soon come round for Neath Hill.

"Can you enlighten me on the policy of The Spastics Society concerning people with disabilities other than cerebral palsy?"

When I was at a Society school, quite a long time ago, we seemed to have a number of students with a wide variety of disabilities. Now, it appears the Society is more selective and only helps those with cerebral palsy.

A few years ago I asked for help from another organisation and was told that I could not belong to their club.

What I am saying is that the Society should try to help its own more, rather than spreading the net too widely. After all, other societies only help their own. It seems a



Simon Crompton

shame, though, because I think The Spastics Society gave a lead to a lot of other disability charities."

The Spastics Society was founded in 1952 to assist and provide services for people of all ages with cerebral palsy. This was because there were so few, if any, suitable provisions for people with this complex disability.

The Society's services are planned and run to meet the special needs of those who have cerebral palsy and the demand for places in most units has always been high.

There *have* been occasions when it has been possible to offer facilities to those with similar disabilities and this has been beneficial to everyone.

I do wonder whether there were as many children with other disabilities in your school as you suggest. It may be that pupils had different types of cp as this diagnosis covers a wide range of disabilities.

Like The Spastics Society, most single disability organisations tend to restrict services to those who meet their criteria and there are sound arguments to justify specialisation.

If the Society were to cast its net too widely, provisions for people with cp would probably have to be restricted, expertise may be lost and some of those who are more severely disabled may have to be excluded.

On the other hand, in the interests of integration one hopes that many of the single disability barriers will eventually disappear and that organisations with a much wider range of membership will flourish.

It would be interesting to know what other readers feel about this issue. So do write to me if you have views on the specialisation v integration debate.



There's no such thing as a free lunch - and *Disability Now* is no exception.

The newspaper costs The Spastics Society 50p a copy or £6 for a year's supply. At the moment it comes to you free.

If you enjoy reading *Disability Now* and would like to see it continue, please send us a donation. £1 or £1000, everything is welcome!

Please make out cheques and postal orders to The Spastics Society, and send them to

Gayle Mooney
Room 2B, *Disability Now*
FREEPOST, 12 Park Crescent
London W1N 4EQ.

What's On

Conferences and leisure

DEMAND at the London International Furniture Show. Design and Manufacture for Disability is showing a new collection of furniture for people with disabilities at Earls Court on 1-4 May. Registered disabled visitors are admitted free on 1 May. Admission £3.50 for adults (£2 after 5pm), £2 for children under 14 and OAPs. For more information contact DEMAND, 99 Leman Street, London E1 8EY. Tel: 01-488 9869.

Arts Integration Weekend Workshop. The British Theatre Association, in association with a number of disability organisations, is organising this weekend for disabled and able-bodied people on 2-3 May at the Albany Empire, Deptford, London. Classes on offer include mime, dance, music and visual and tactile arts. The cost is £10. Further details from Victoria Thompson, Training Organiser, BTA, Regent's College, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NW. Tel: 01-935 2571.

Mobility Open Day at Banstead Place Mobility Centre, Park Road, Banstead, Surrey, 6 May, 2pm-4.30pm. The centre provides information and assessment, and demonstrates cars and pavement vehicles for disabled people. For further details contact Jenny Collis, Welfare Dept, The Multiple Sclerosis Society, L25, Effie Road, Fulham, London SW6. Tel: 01-736 6267.

Electronic Aids for Disabled People is a talk by Roger Jefcoate, consultant assessor and lecturer in technical aids for people with disabilities on 6 May in the Physiotherapy Department at Homerton Hospital. People from all disciplines and interests are welcome. Further information from the Regional Neurological Rehabilitation Unit, Homerton Hospital, Homerton Row, London E9 6SR. Tel: 01-985 5555.

Toys and Technology for Disabled People is a practical day course being held on 12 May at the Concert Hall, Bronllys Hospital, Powys. Course director is Roger Jefcoate. Fees: £9 professionals, £6 voluntary workers, disabled people, relatives, £5 ACTIVE members, £8 families. Further details from Post Basic Education Department, Honddu Unit Bronllys Hospital, Bronllys, Brecon, Powys LD3 0LS. Tel: (0874) 711661, ext 4537.

1987 Handicapped Living Exhibition is being held on 15-17 May at the Handicapped Living Centre, 67-71 The Wicker, Sheffield S3 8HT. As well as the permanent, comprehensive range of equipment for elderly and disabled people, specialist manufacturers will be demonstrating their products. Further details from Angela Bennett at the Centre, tel: (0742) 72329.

Living With Disability is a conference on the problems of disabled women and carers in society. Speakers include Sandra Leventon from the Association of Carers and Valerie Vaughn from the Pain Relief Foundation. 16 May at the Lime Court Day Centre, Upper Baker Street, Liverpool. Further information from Margaret Citrine, Disablement Resource Unit, Mount Vernon Green, Hall Lane, Liverpool L7 8TF. Tel: 051-709 0990, ext 226.

Integration at Secondary Level is a day conference for parents and interested professionals organised by the Parents' Campaign for Integrated Education on Saturday 16 May at the Tower Hamlets Adult Institute, Smithy Street, London E1. Further information from Margaret Gault, Secretary, PCIE, 25 Woodnook Road, London SW16. Tel: 01-677 9828.

Therapy in Music for Handicapped Children is a weekend course on 16-17 May at The Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre, 3 Leighton Place, London NW5. It is for teachers, parents and anyone interested in working with handicapped children. Further details from The Secretary, The Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre. Tel: 01-267 6296.

Puppetry and the Disabled Performer. The Puppet Centre is organising three weekend workshops, to provide training in puppetry skills including making, manipulation, and devising. They take place 16-17 May, 30-31 May and 6-7 June. £17 per weekend. Further information from Keith Allen, Puppet Centre Trust, Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, London SW11 5TJ. Tel: 01-228 5335.

Northern Naidex '87, the aids and equipment exhibition for disabled and elderly people, is being held at the G-Mex Centre, Manchester on 27-29 May. Entry to the exhibition is free. *Disability Now* will be there! Further information from Naidex Conventions Ltd, 90 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2UN. Tel: (0892) 44027.

Courses at Castle Priory

Child Abuse and Neglect - aims to bring together staff from field and residential social work, the law, medicine and education. The emphasis is on child sexual abuse. 3-5 June. £124 inclusive.

Listening and Responding - a basic course for those wishing to improve counselling skills with parents, people with disabilities or colleagues. 5-7 June. Tuition £48, residence £44, non-residence £16.

Leisure, Recreation and Sports in Day and Residential Services - a practical and theoretical programme for leaders of activities, recreations officers and administrators. It will demonstrate pursuits available, adaptation to setting and disability, organisational techniques and use of resources. 22-26 June. Tuition £60, residence £88, non-residence £32.

The Special Needs of Children and Adolescents with Physical and Communication Disorders - primarily for educational and clinical psychologists. 1-3 July. Tuition £55, residence £44, non-residence £16.

For more information about any of these courses, write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: (0491) 37551.



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ALVEMA MAX "PUSH-TYPE" WHEELCHAIR. £550 (ono). As new, Original price £662 (March 1986). No longer suitable for owner's requirements. Contact J Buggy, tel: 061-881 0911 (office hours) or D Fentrell, tel: 061-881 2348.

Wanted

PHYSIOTHERAPIST & SPEECH THERAPIST for part-time work with 7-year old cp boy living in Leeds. Mr P Almond, 14 Whinmoor Gardens, Leeds LS14 1AF. Tel: (0532) 655708.

ORTHOKINETIC ADAPTIVE COM-MODE. Barbara Bradley. Tel: (0582) 841221.

Holidays

THORNBURY HALL HOTEL, Churnet Valley. Specialised facilities for all disabilities. Companion service available (no extra cost) to allow all the family to enjoy themselves. Conference facilities and study/craft courses available on request.

GLAD

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARIES

Two experienced Administrative Secretaries are needed by a busy London Charity to help develop its work for people with disabilities throughout London. Good Secretarial skills and organising ability and a flexible approach to varied work are essential. W.P. and Audio experience an advantage. Must be able to work in a team on their own initiative and under pressure.

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Send C.V. to:

The Administrator, Greater London Association for Disabled People, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA.

GLAD is an Equal Opportunities employer and particularly welcome applications from disabled people. Our offices are fully accessible. GLAD receives funding from the London Boroughs Grants Committee.

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8-BERTH CARAVAN & BEACH HUT at Felixstowe, run by local Spastics Society. Both suitable for wheelchair users. For details contact Miss J M Wood, 50 High Road East, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9PU. Tel: (0394) 283794.

BROAD HAVEN CARAVAN PARK. Sand and green hills cradle this award winning caravan park which has an especially adapted holiday caravan for a wheelchair user and their family. Only a 350 yard flat walk to the sea front and sandy beach. Write for a brochure to Broad Haven Caravan Park, Broad Haven, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 3JD or telephone 0437 83277.

Services

SPECIAL CARE AGENCY finds nannies-mothers' helps for handicapped children (like mine), or care assistants for adults, everywhere. Ring Linda Layton (0491) 671842.

Find-A-Friend

DISABLED LADY with cp and some hearing loss, 34, would like to correspond with male penfriends. My hobbies include swimming, PHAB Club, photography, reading, pop and classical music. All letters answered. Please write to Box No 126, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

LADY, 50, divorced with 4 grown-up children, would like to correspond with people disabled or able-bodied. Particularly interested to hear from a fellow amputee to share experience and advice (have a "thru the hip joint" type and find using an artificial limb difficult). Please

write to Box No 144, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

RESPECTABLE, 60-YEAR-OLD WIDOW, caring for my 19 year old son who has cerebral palsy and epilepsy, would love to find a friend. Will answer all who care to write. Please write to Box No 145, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

DISABLED LADY, 63, would like to correspond with someone near home (Bedford). Interests include books, history, music, writing and people. Please write to Box No 146, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

DISABLED (ARTHRITIC) WIDOW, 59, would like to hear from kindly gentleman in same age group who is a car driver (as I am), likes letter writing and travel. Please write to Box No 147, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

YOUNG LADY, nearly 21, proud owner of electric powerchair, would like to correspond with someone in another part of the country (I live in London). My interests include pop music, parties, going out with friends for a drink, also typing and computing. I also try my best to stick to diets. Please write to Box No 148, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

DISABLED MAN, would like a young able-bodied lady between 18 and 45 to write to me. I have cerebral palsy and use a wheelchair. Please write to Peter Odell, Cheshire Home, Alne Hall, Alne, York YO6 2JA.

CLASSIFIED RATES: £1.50 per line, with a minimum charge of £6. Advertisers are invoiced after the advertisement appears. Find-a-Friend column is free. (All ads are free for members of The Spastics Society or an affiliated group).

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is seeking to fill two posts:

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£8,049-£8,910 inclusive

To provide a full range of administrative services to the D.R.C., including servicing meetings, publicity and some personnel duties. You will have experience of administrative work, including word processing.

For an application form, please write to:

D.R.C., 1a Warner Road, Walthamstow, London E17 7DY.
or telephone 01-520 0026, 9.30am-3pm

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 22nd MAY 1987

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

INSTRUCTOR:

£9,129-£9,954 inc.pa.

Required at Annexe Day Centre for people with physical disabilities. The Centre caters for up to 30 people a day and aims to maximise independence and improve confidence through providing a programme of activities rehabilitative, therapeutic, educational and recreational.

The Instructor will plan and run groups and take keyworker responsibility for a number of centre users, this involves providing information, advice and counselling when required.

It is desirable that the successful applicant has experience of working with people with physical disabilities or has personal experience of disability. The successful applicant must possess skills and/or knowledge in one or more specific areas eg. computing, sport, literacy and numeracy teaching, welfare rights, groupwork, counselling, daily living skills (teaching and assessment), creative arts (photography, pottery etc). At present the post demands dealing with users physical care needs, but this should not deter people with physical disability from applying.

It is essential that the successful applicant has a non-patronising positive attitude towards centre users, and a commitment to the philosophy of the day centre as a community resource. It should be recognised that in all aspects of our work the right to self-determination of centre users is respected.

For further information contact Colin Melville, (Centre Manager), Stanley Road, Teddington (01-894 5544 Ext. 246).

Form from Director of Social Services, 6th Floor, Regal House, London Road, Twickenham, (01-891 7640), returnable by 21st April 1987. Please quote Ref. No. SS/S/126

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Full details and application forms from:

**The Director
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Please quote ref: PR4

Closing date for receipt of completed applications: 13 April 1987.

Greater London Arts welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of an individual's sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, age, political or religious belief, or responsibility for dependants.

Development and Research Officer (North) - Alpha Advisory Committee

Scale 5 (£8,391-£9,513) plus car loan and allowance

The Alpha Advisory Committee is The Spastics Society's Advisory Committee of people with cerebral palsy.

The Committee uses most of its budget to fund three Development and Research Officers. The longest serving of these is leaving to join the Equal Opportunities Unit of a local authority, and we are therefore seeking his replacement.

The Development and Research Officers' role is to put into practice the aims of the Committee, and in particular to assist in the development of Alpha Committees and groups at regional and local levels.

This particular post covers the Society's North East and North West Regions, an area stretching from Cheshire and South Yorkshire to the Scottish Border. The base is open to negotiation within the area.

We are looking for a man or woman with a physical disability, probably due to cerebral palsy. The successful candidate should have organisational ability, and be able to manage their own work without close supervision. Community development or group work skills would be an advantage. The post will involve considerable travelling, evening and weekend work and periods away from home.

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We will be pleased to consider the applications from suitable candidates qualifying for assistance under the MSC Sheltered Placement Scheme. Job-sharing candidates will also be considered.

For an informal discussion, please contact Marian Bowen on 0743-64855, or Sharon Hughes on Bristol 655822 (after 13th April).

For further details and an application form, please contact Nigel Smith, Community Services Development Manager, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ (01 636 5020). Closing Date: 18th May 1987.

THE SPASTICS SOCIETY
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Low standards found in centres for cp people

Most of the 19 work centres which employ some 700 cp people and are run by local groups affiliated to The Spastics Society are in "a parlous state," says a new report.

Nearly £½ million needs to be spent immediately on building and maintenance and £125,000 a year thereafter, estimates a working party drawn from management, staff and regional committees, 2 of them with cerebral palsy.

An analysis of the income and expenditure accounts of the centres revealed that 6 were in a poor financial state or in danger of being so.

"The problems which stood head and shoulders above the others were those concerning the quality and nature of life which was being imposed upon those least able to speak for themselves," said Bill Hargreaves, chairman of the working party, in his summary.

The working party found cp people sometimes described as "dears" or even "inmates". Many work centres had an air of isolation and the work was boring and unimaginative. Most of the staff and management committees lacked formal training and people with disabilities had little say in the management. Few centres had a system of assessment or re-assessment which would encourage personal development.

The working party attributes the low standards to lack of money, lack of expertise on the part of the management committees and the absence of an overall standard.

Bill Hargreaves emphasises that the survey was undertaken at the request of the Regions Committee and he thinks it was a brave decision of the Executive Council to publish the results. "This shows that The Spastics Society is not afraid to stand back and say, 'How can we do things better?'" he said.

"In no way is the report intended to be a criticism of any

one individual or group of individuals," says Douglas Shapland, chairman of the Society. "It simply identifies what has developed over a period of many years and recognises that what was perfectly valid a decade or so ago may not be appropriate today."

"I am delighted that as a direct result of the working party's visits, some local groups have already begun to develop their centres," he added.

All those included in the survey - local group members, management committees, staff and disabled people - will be invited to a seminar on 26-27 September to discuss the recommendations. These include:

- The Spastics Society to produce agreed guidelines for adult day service provision in affiliated group work centres which are "needs led" and based on minimum standards.
- Improve staff training with training needs drawn up by management committees and the national Society and reviewed regularly.
- Offer people with disabilities the same level of training as the staff.
- Explore ways of including local fee negotiations within the national negotiating framework.
- Make a serious effort to provide more interesting and varied work and activities.
- Launch a national competition to find appropriate work and appoint a commercial manager to ensure revenue income.
- Extend the range of the centres to include people with other disabilities.
- Provide recreation and leisure in the centres if nothing else is available.
- Rename the work centres Skills Development Centres.

Report of the Local Group Work Centres' Working Party is available from the Regions Division, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ, £2.25 (including postage).



Goodbye to all that. Nineteen children with disabilities waved goodbye to Britain last month, as they set off from Hammersmith Town Hall for a 2 week holiday of a lifetime in Florida, savouring the delights of Disneyland. Money for the trip was raised by Hammersmith and Fulham Council, local unions and the Fulham Palace Playground for disabled children.

GLA leads the way on arts and disability policy

A series of bold initiatives by Greater London Arts look set to improve arts opportunities for people with disabilities in Britain's arts capital.

Having just published the most hard-hitting policy document and code of practice on disability to emerge from a regional arts association (RAA) yet, GLA will also be the first RAA to appoint an officer solely responsible for disabled people. Small grants to help arts organisations improve access and facilities will be made available.

The policy statement includes "a course of positive progressive action" to achieve its aim of participation in the arts for disabled people. GLA will give priority for funding to those organisations employing people with disabilities at every level, and who create training opportunities in the arts for disabled people.

East Midlands Arts and the Buckinghamshire Arts Association launched their joint guidelines on disabled people and the arts in February. They followed Lincolnshire and Humberside

Arts. North West Arts is also planning a document.

Margarethe de Neergaard, Arts and Disability Officer at the Arts Council, is delighted at the way RAAs are responding, and believes that most of the 12 in England and 3 in Wales will be well on the way to having a clear policy on people with disabilities set forward by this month.

"GLA has taken the Arts Council code a step further by saying in specific terms that if it is not implemented by its clients there will be financial implications. It actually has teeth. Hopefully it has set an example which other RAAs can follow."

The Arts council is setting up a monitoring committee composed mainly of people with disabilities, which will assess how the council's own code is being implemented by its clients, and what progress RAAs are making.

Benefits ruling could cost Government £25 million

Thousands of people on the lower rate of attendance allowance could be eligible for the higher rate in the wake of a court judgement which could cost the Government over £25 million a year.

Social Services Secretary Norman Fowler is now considering whether to appeal against the decision.

In a test case last month the Appeal Court ruled that Mrs Dorothy Moran of Birkenhead, who has epilepsy, should be paid the higher rate of attendance allowance because she needs supervision day and night. This means she will get an extra £10 a week.

The ruling affects thousands of people who now get the lower rate of £20.65, who could be entitled to the higher £30.95 rate. Mr Ian Glick, counsel for Mr Fowler, said that people with diabetes, asthma or cystic fibrosis; mentally handicapped or hyperactive children; stroke victims and severely confused elderly people could all possibly claim the higher rate.

Mrs Moran is looked after full-time by her husband. She has unpredictable epileptic attacks lasting between 30 minutes and two hours, which would put her in "substantial danger" if she was not supervised.

She was paid the lower rate of attendance allowance because the DHSS agreed she needed day-time supervision. But Mrs Moran argued that because her attacks were unpredictable she needed full-time help and so qualified for the higher rate.

The Spastics Society's benefits adviser suggests that anyone on the lower rate of attendance allowance who plans to apply for the higher rate should seek the advice of an experienced benefits officer, as an incomplete application can occasionally lead to loss of benefit altogether.

ONE COMPLETED COUPON AND DISABILITY NOW IS ANYONE'S

Disability Now is the newspaper for disabled people and professionals in the disability field. And it's free! Every month it brings you:

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